

my Golden Library of

Animal Stories

**FROM AUSTRALIA AND
NEW ZEALAND**

Volume 2



GOLDEN PRESS
Sydney • Auckland

First Published 1979 by Golden Press Pty. Ltd.
2-12 Tennyson Road, Gladesville N.S.W. 2111 Australia
16 Copsey Place, Avondale Auckland 7 New Zealand
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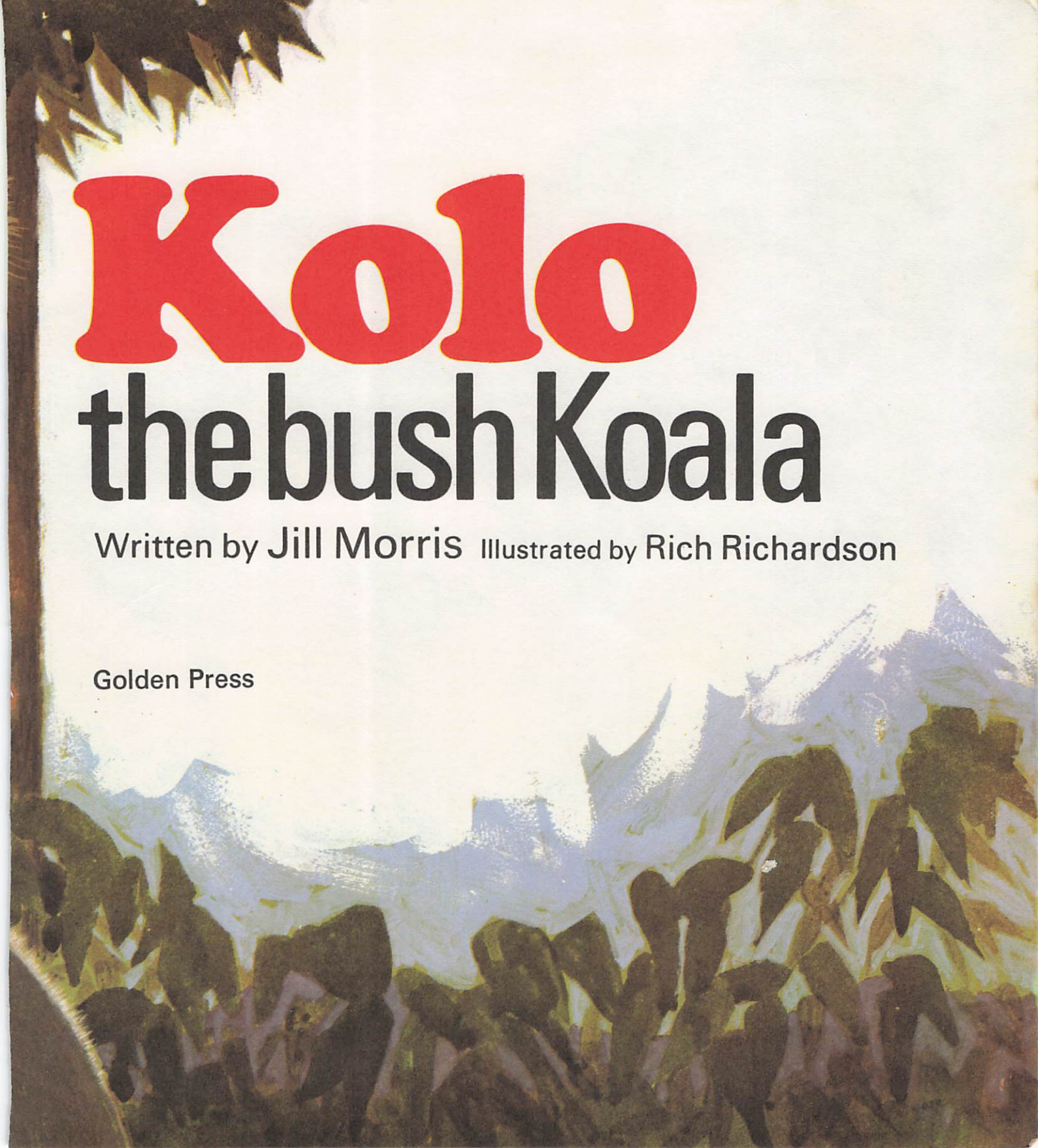
ISBN 0 85558 509 9

Printed in Singapore by Toppan Printing Company.

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Kolo

the bush Koala

Written by Jill Morris Illustrated by Rich Richardson

Golden Press

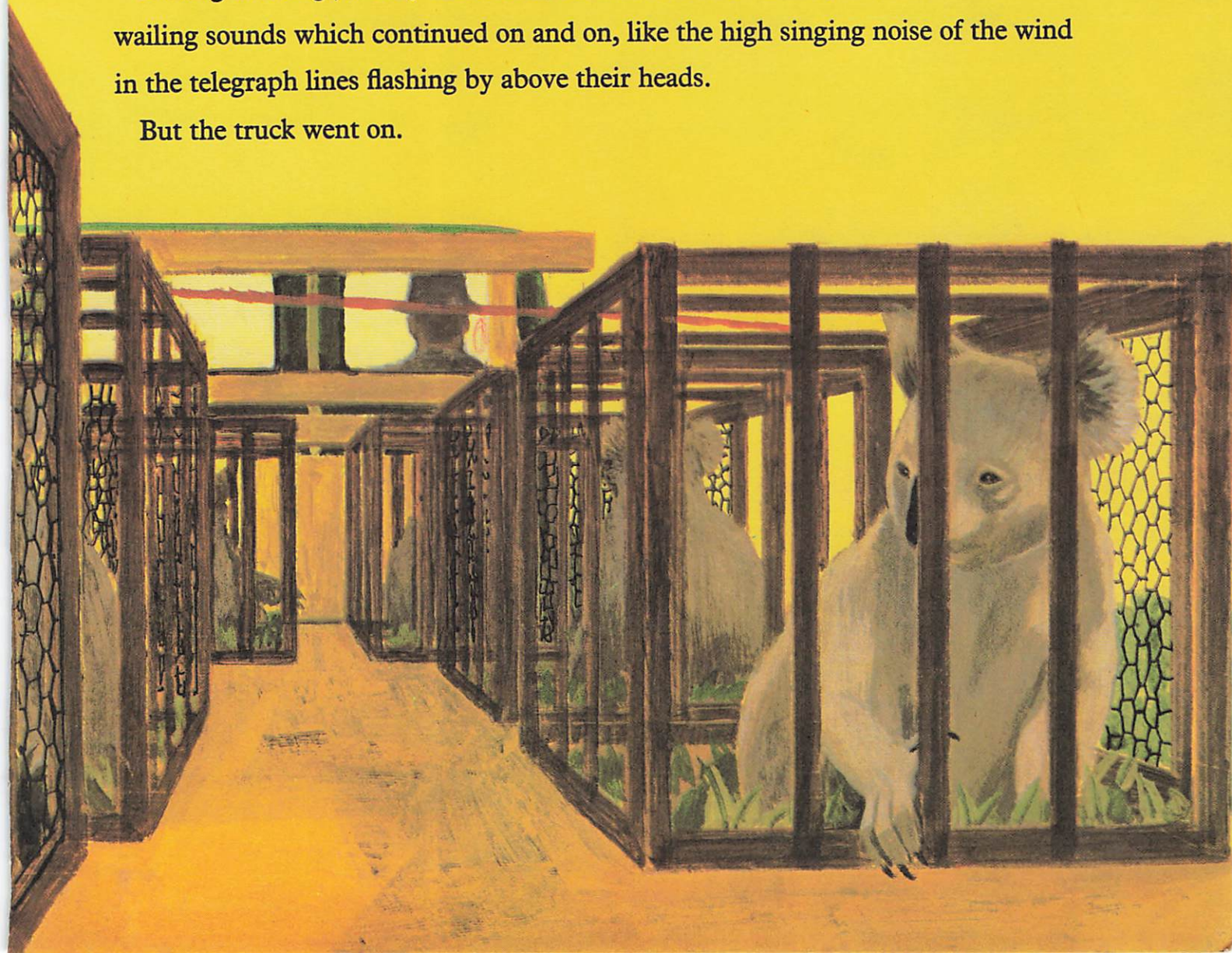


A large old man koala grunted crossly as he moved to peer through the sides of the truck at the trees rushing past him along the road. Kolo understood his anger, for she, too, was afraid.

Kolo had no idea how long she had been in the truck, but it seemed a very long time—long enough for the gum-leaves to harden and wither so that they no longer tasted juicy and sweet.

During the long journey most of the koalas had been afraid, and had made loud wailing sounds which continued on and on, like the high singing noise of the wind in the telegraph lines flashing by above their heads.

But the truck went on.





Kolo had been unprepared when the men arrived and began to catch the animals and take them to a place where there was more food. She felt young and strong as she reached to grasp the highest, sweetest leaves; she did not notice that some of the other koalas had nothing to eat.

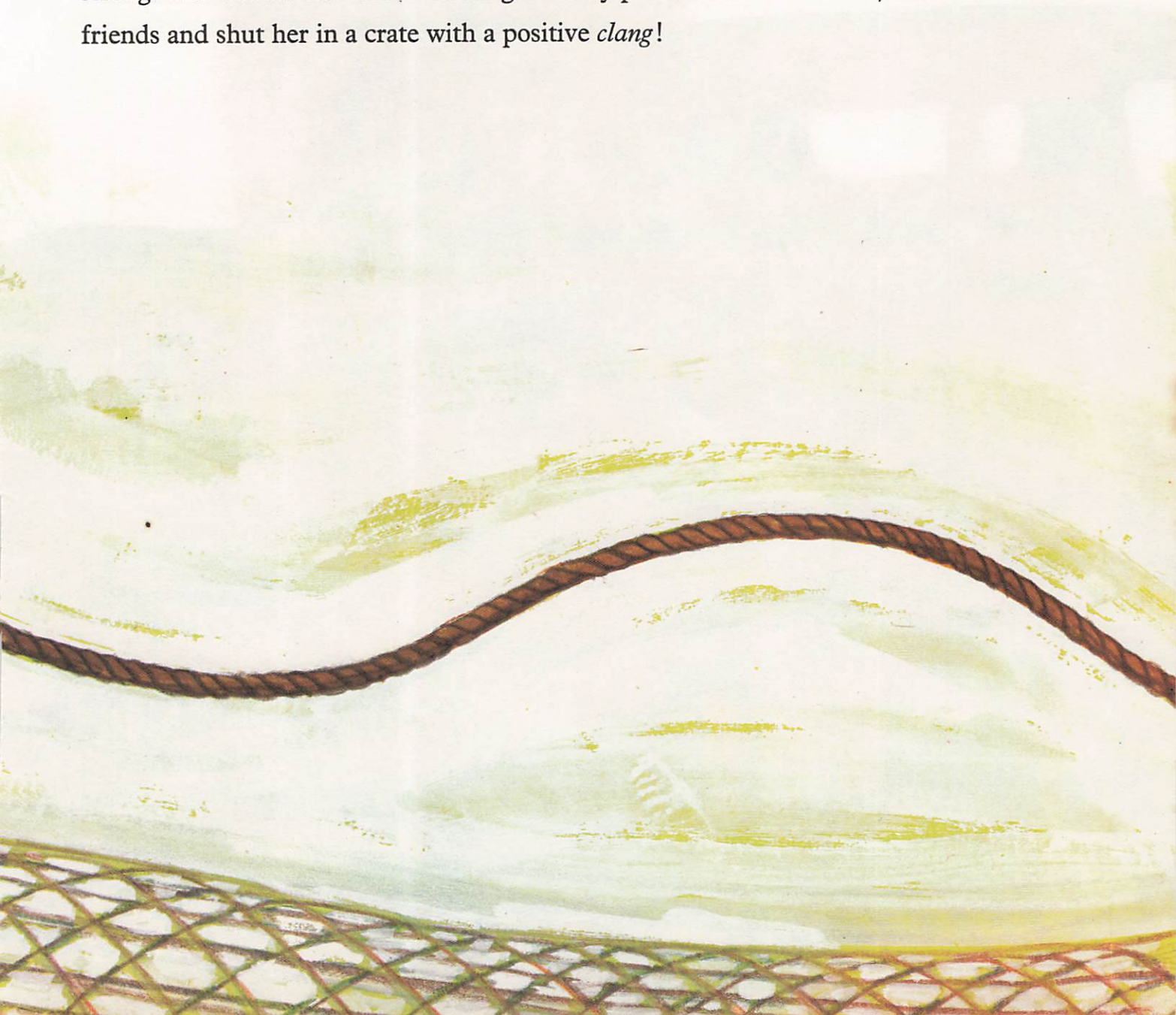
The koalas nearest the ground were lifted gently from their perch; they were sleepy and did not protest. But Kolo was not to be caught; she tried to get away by climbing to a higher branch, so high that the men below looked like ants that swarmed around the honey spilling from a hole in a eucalyptus gum.





But one man climbed the tree after her! He climbed up a ladder and put a loop around her fur; then he jerked it and pulled her down, till she fell with a BOUNCE! to the canvas held by other men below.

She struggled, she scratched with her sharp little claws, but the men's arms were strong. She was the last one to be caught. They put her in the truck to join her friends and shut her in a crate with a positive *clang*!



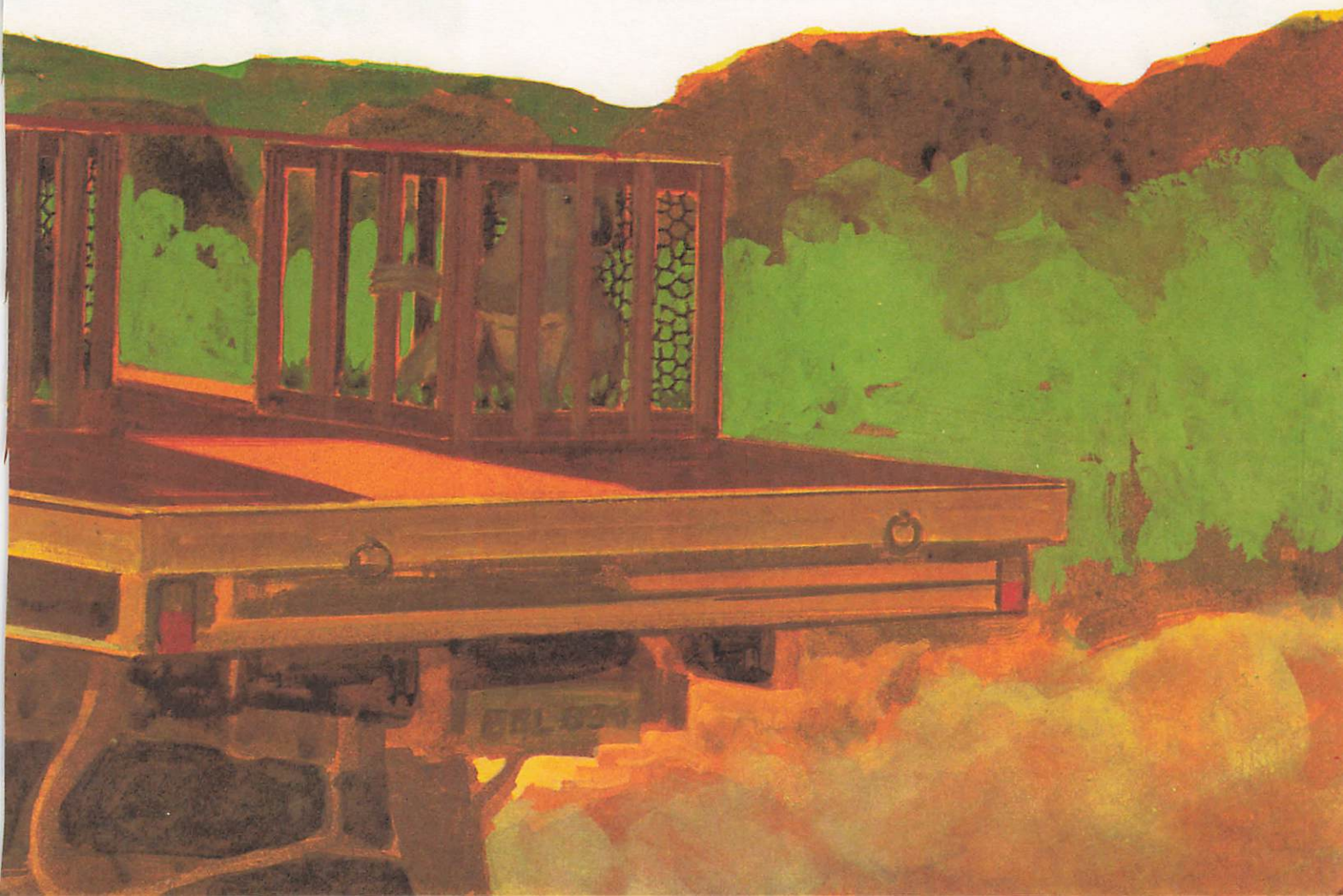


DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERY

There were many shapes and sizes in the truck—some squealing, some grunting, some going back to sleep without a care for what had happened or where they were going, some nibbling on leaves—leaves that were not even growing on a tree!

Kolo thought how silly they were, not to put up a fight, just to sit calmly and let this happen.

They could sleep, but she would not!



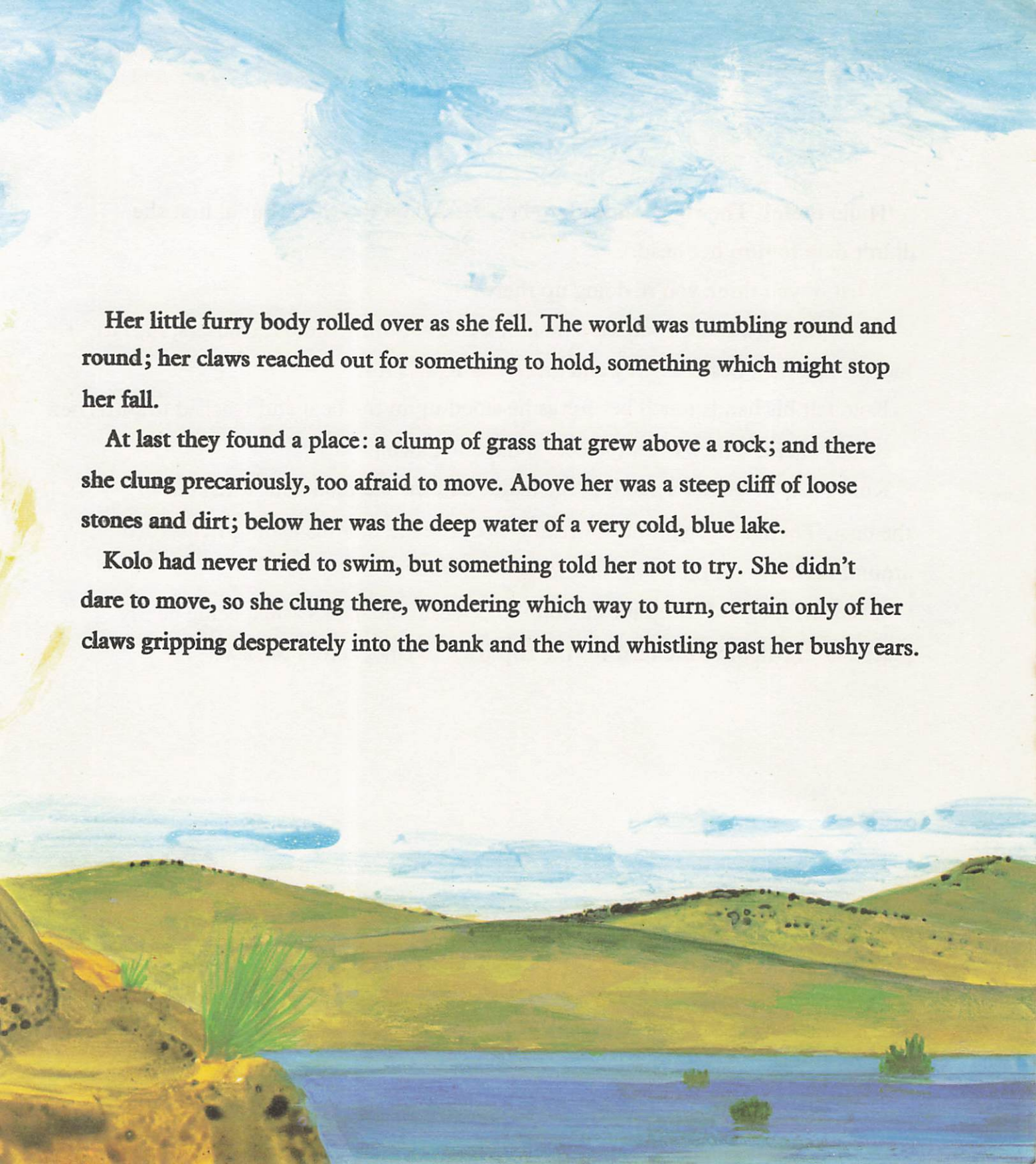
The bouncing and jolting of the truck
was loosening the door of the cage.
Kolo saw her chance! She pushed
and pushed with all her might.
Suddenly, just as the truck roared louder
and bounced higher than ever,
the door gave way and swung open.

Kolo jumped as hard as she could
without a thought of what might
happen if she left the friends she knew.





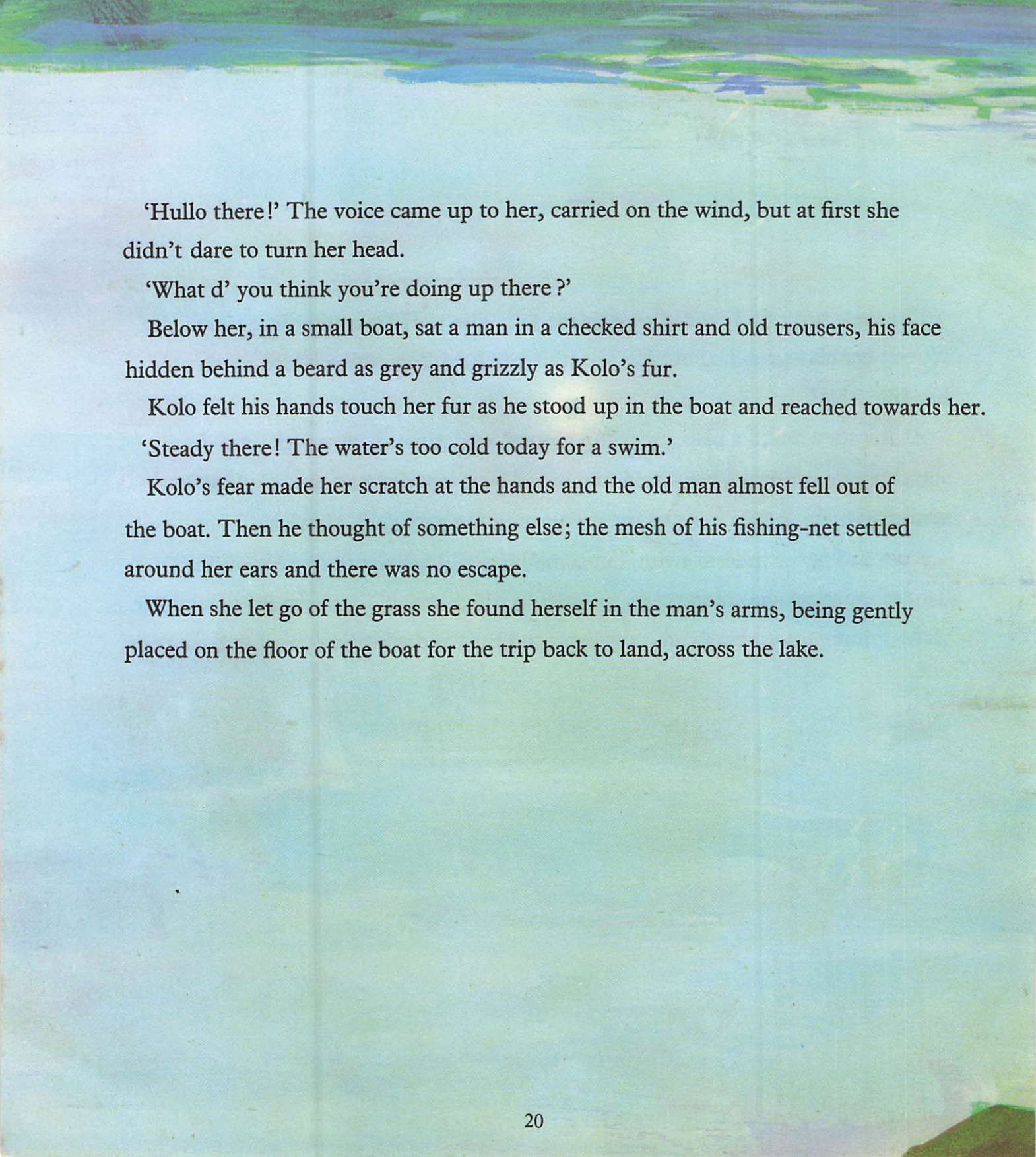




Her little furry body rolled over as she fell. The world was tumbling round and round; her claws reached out for something to hold, something which might stop her fall.

At last they found a place: a clump of grass that grew above a rock; and there she clung precariously, too afraid to move. Above her was a steep cliff of loose stones and dirt; below her was the deep water of a very cold, blue lake.

Kolo had never tried to swim, but something told her not to try. She didn't dare to move, so she clung there, wondering which way to turn, certain only of her claws gripping desperately into the bank and the wind whistling past her bushy ears.



‘Hullo there!’ The voice came up to her, carried on the wind, but at first she didn’t dare to turn her head.

‘What d’ you think you’re doing up there?’

Below her, in a small boat, sat a man in a checked shirt and old trousers, his face hidden behind a beard as grey and grizzly as Kolo’s fur.

Kolo felt his hands touch her fur as he stood up in the boat and reached towards her.

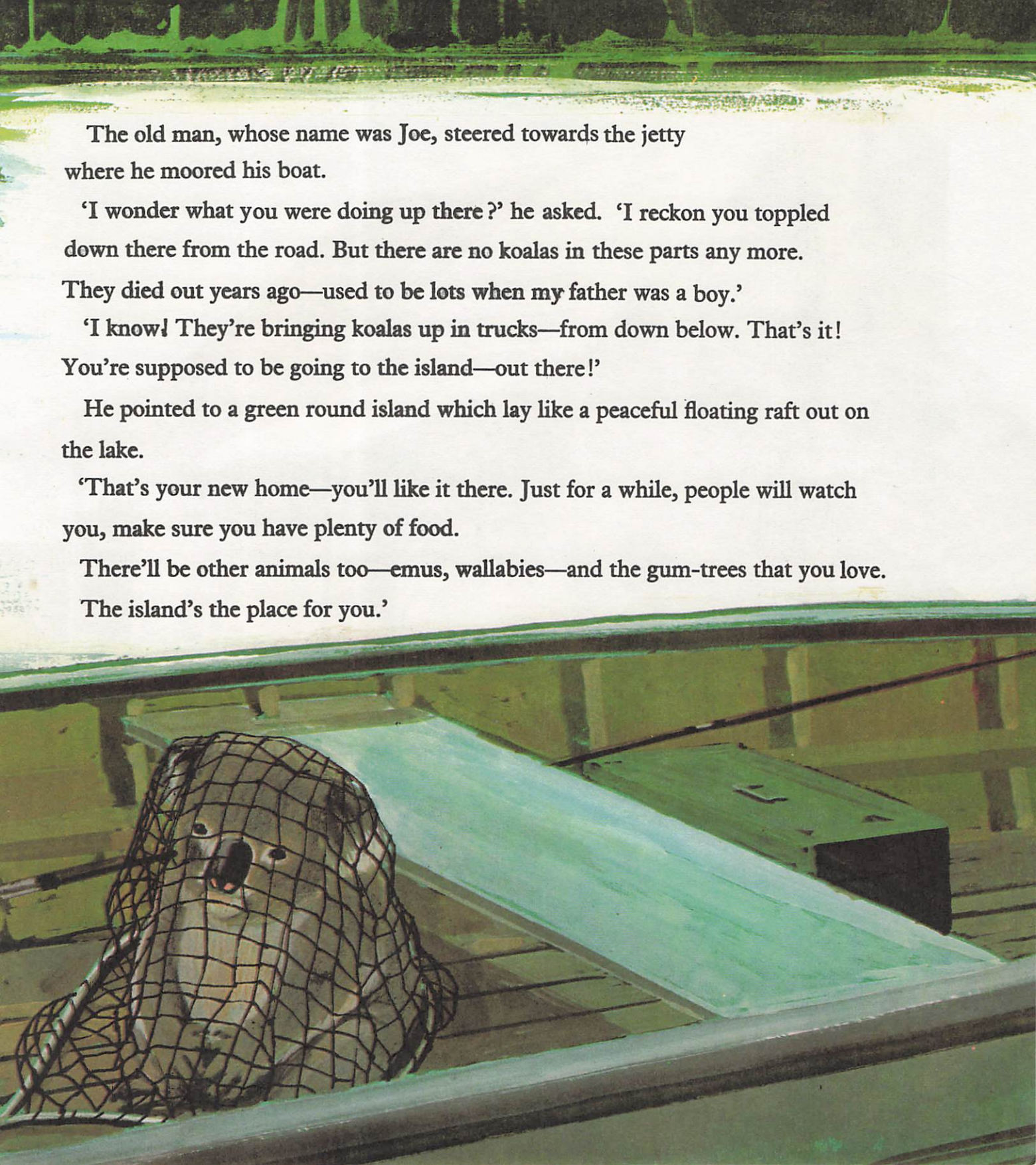
‘Steady there! The water’s too cold today for a swim.’

Kolo’s fear made her scratch at the hands and the old man almost fell out of the boat. Then he thought of something else; the mesh of his fishing-net settled around her ears and there was no escape.

When she let go of the grass she found herself in the man’s arms, being gently placed on the floor of the boat for the trip back to land, across the lake.





The background of the page is a painting. At the top, there's a dark, silhouetted forest. Below that, a body of water reflects the sky. In the foreground, the wooden deck and railing of a boat are visible. A black fishing net is draped over the railing, and a koala is caught inside it, looking out. The koala is brown with a lighter face and chest. The overall style is painterly and somewhat somber.

The old man, whose name was Joe, steered towards the jetty where he moored his boat.

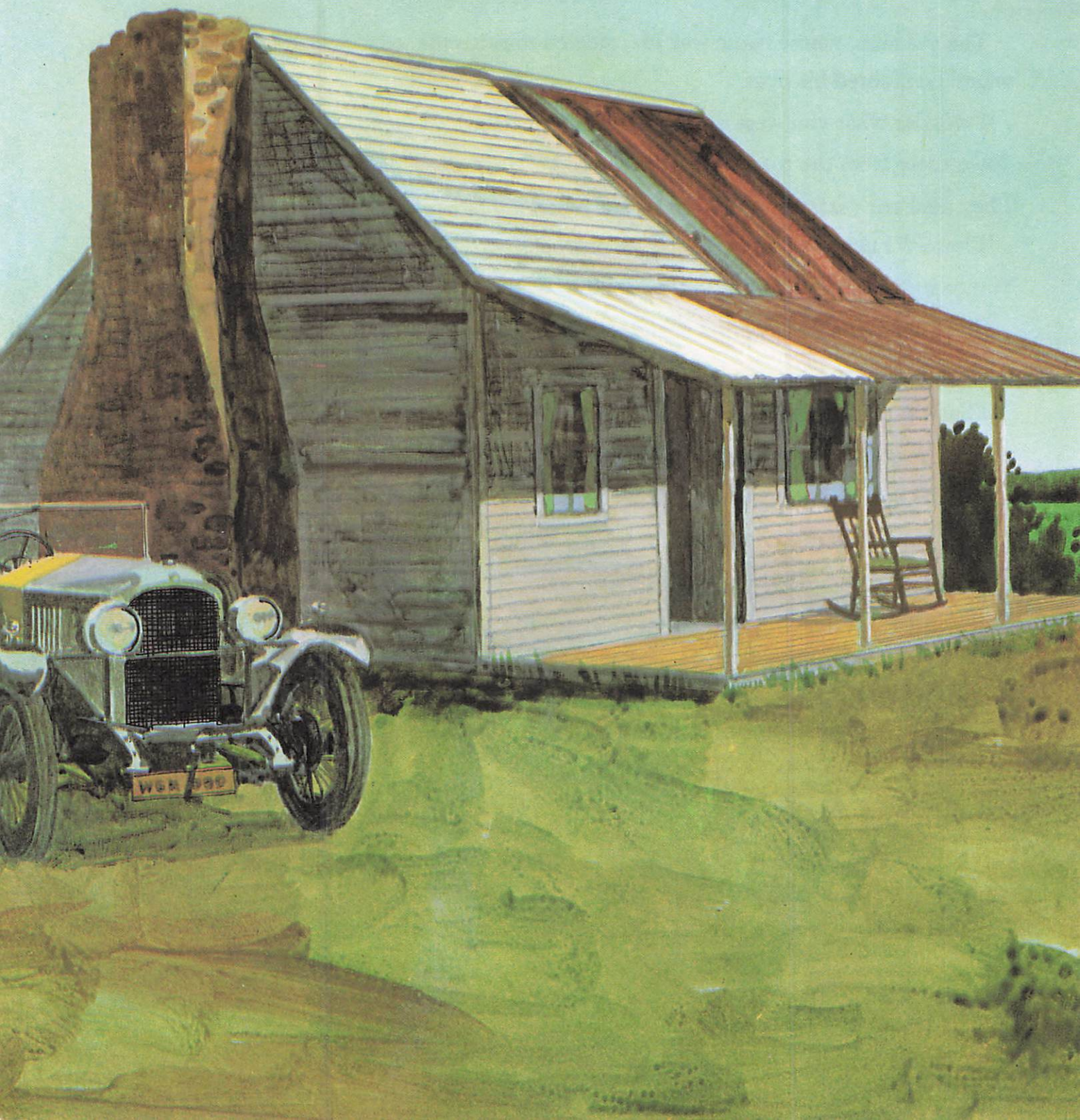
‘I wonder what you were doing up there?’ he asked. ‘I reckon you toppled down there from the road. But there are no koalas in these parts any more. They died out years ago—used to be lots when my father was a boy.’

‘I know! They’re bringing koalas up in trucks—from down below. That’s it! You’re supposed to be going to the island—out there!’

He pointed to a green round island which lay like a peaceful floating raft out on the lake.

‘That’s your new home—you’ll like it there. Just for a while, people will watch you, make sure you have plenty of food.

There’ll be other animals too—emus, wallabies—and the gum-trees that you love. The island’s the place for you.’



Joe took Kolo to his cottage high above the lake. She was too wild to run around freely; she sat unblinking in a laundry-basket cage as Joe prepared his lunch: slices of cold cooked meat; bread; cheese; a pot of tea with a cosy wrapped round it to keep it warm. Joe liked his cup of tea; it was just the thing after fishing, especially when you had caught a koala instead of a fish!

He decided to rest for a while after lunch and then take Kolo to the Council office in the town and send her on her way.

But Kolo had other ideas. She was only waiting for the moment when she could escape again!





After lunch, they sat on the verandah of Joe's little house. Joe was in his rocking-chair; Kolo was still in her laundry-basket cage. The old man pointed towards the lake.

'There's a town down there,' he said, 'at least there used to be before they built the dam.' 'Now it's under the waters of the lake.'

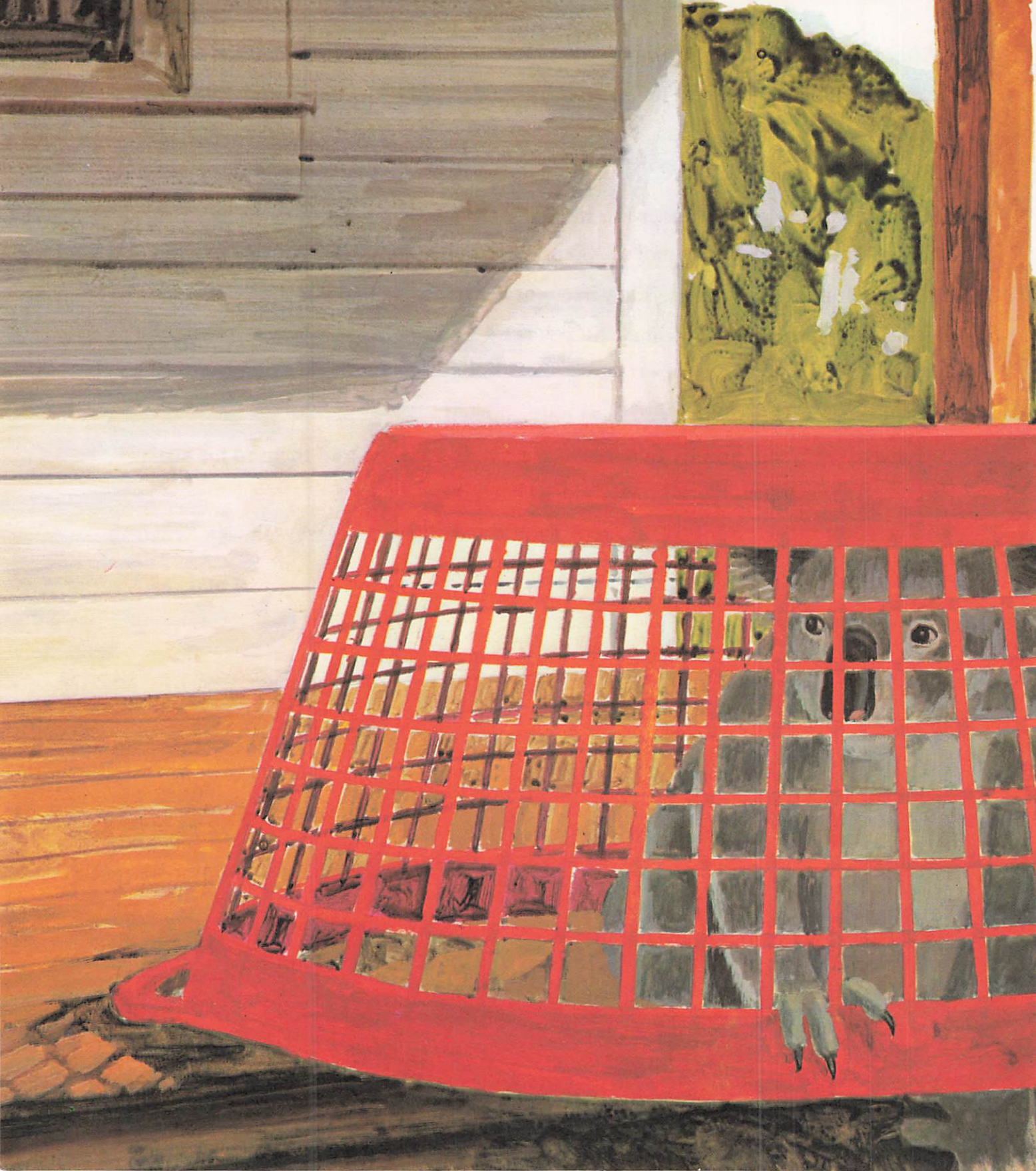
'Some of the houses were moved. Some were pulled down, brick by brick, and built again on higher ground. They brought my house up here on the back of a truck. I was one of the lucky ones. So you see—I know what it's like to move from your home.

'But I took mine with me. You have only yourself.'

Joe had no grandchildren to tell his stories to, so now he told them to his koala friend. Kolo listened, like a grandchild, at his feet.

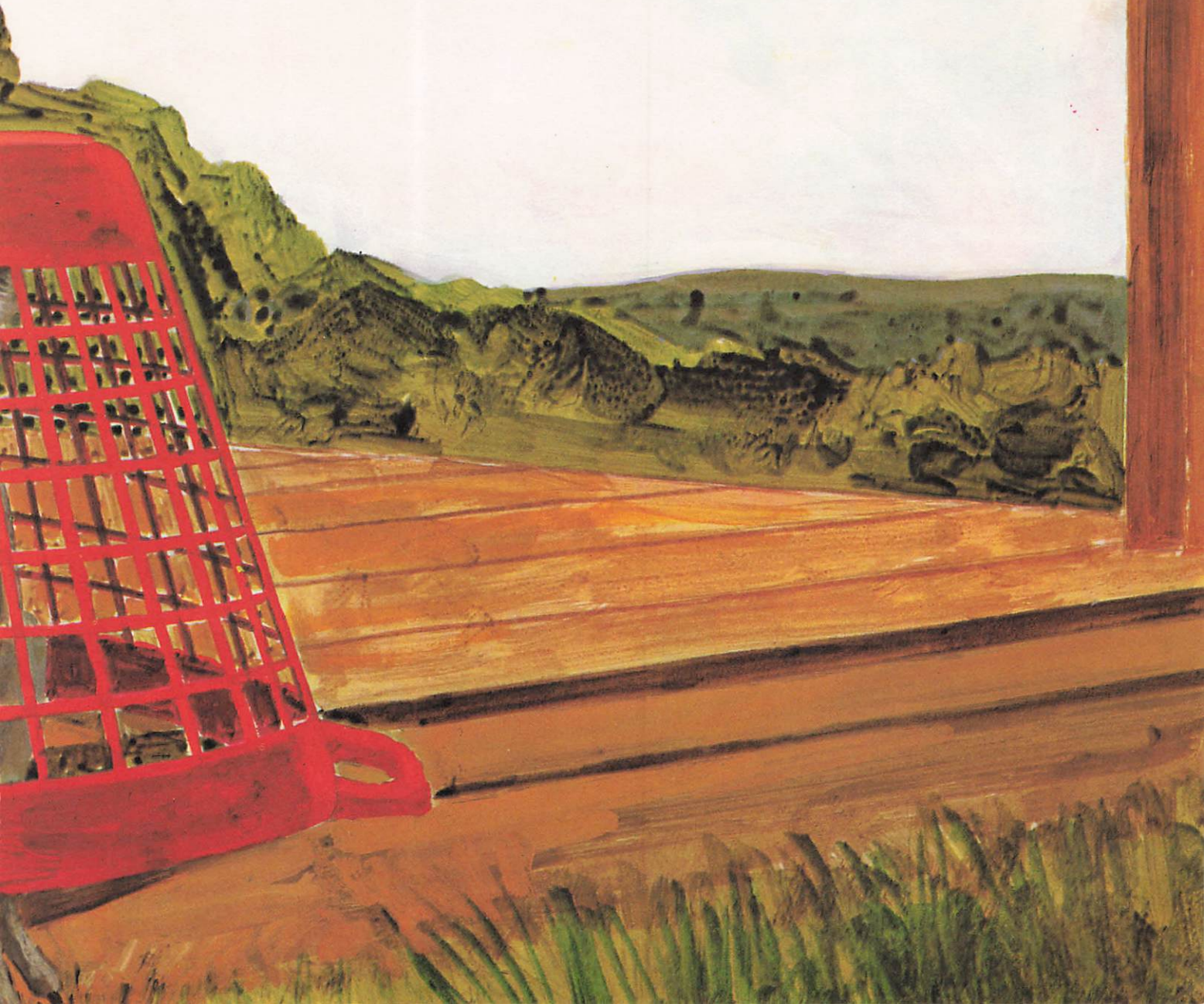
The voice grew softer and the creaking of the rocking-chair grew slower. When it stopped, Kolo knew the old man was asleep.

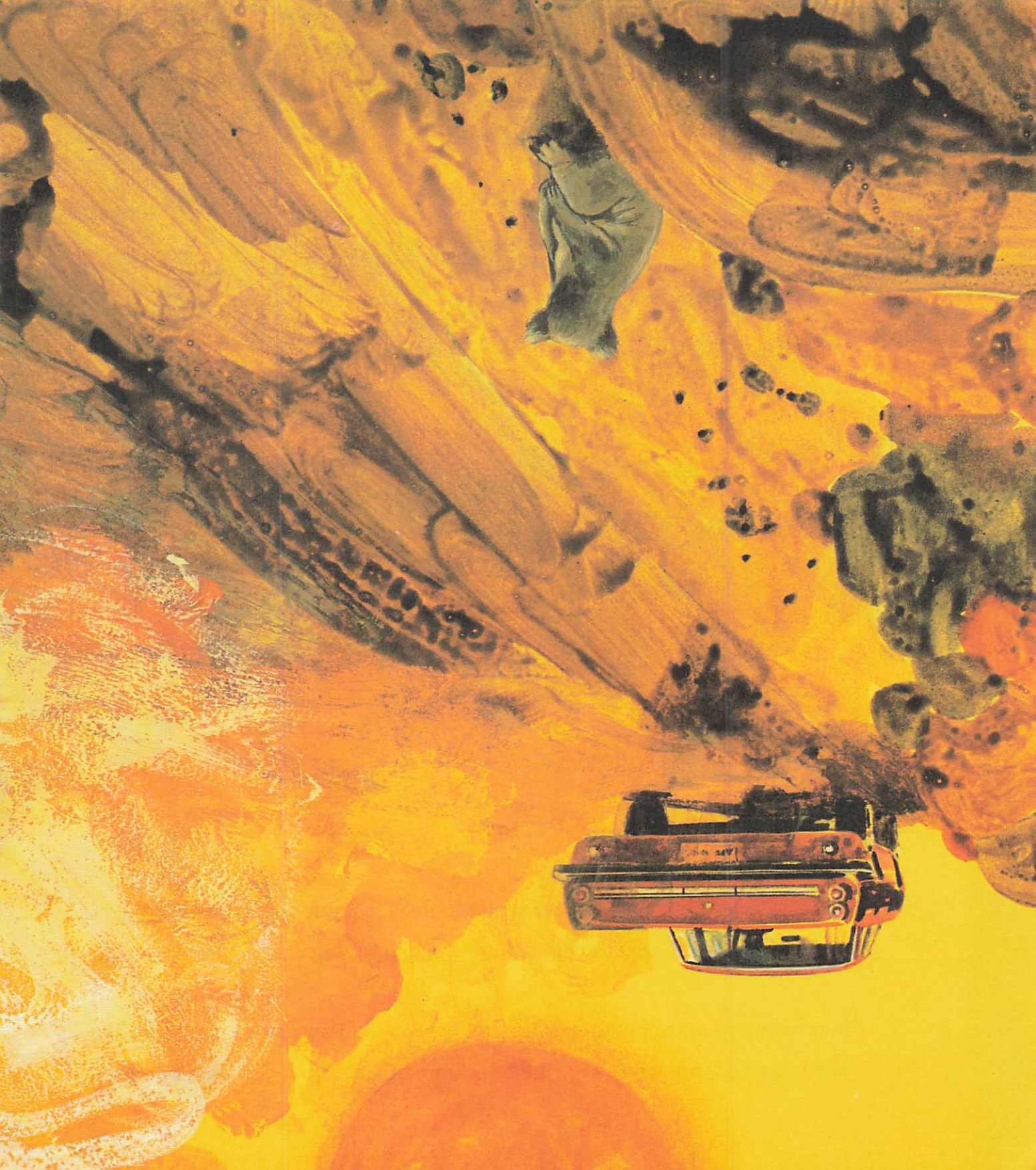




By standing up and pushing with all her weight, Kolo edged the basket along the verandah until it reached the edge. Then she climbed quickly to the ground. The man was still asleep.

She didn't care where she was going; all she thought of was escape! She padded out of Joe's wooden gate and was soon upon the dusty road.





The sun burned into her fur and her nose felt dry and prickly. There were no trees at all along the road, only rough, jagged stones that pricked her paws.

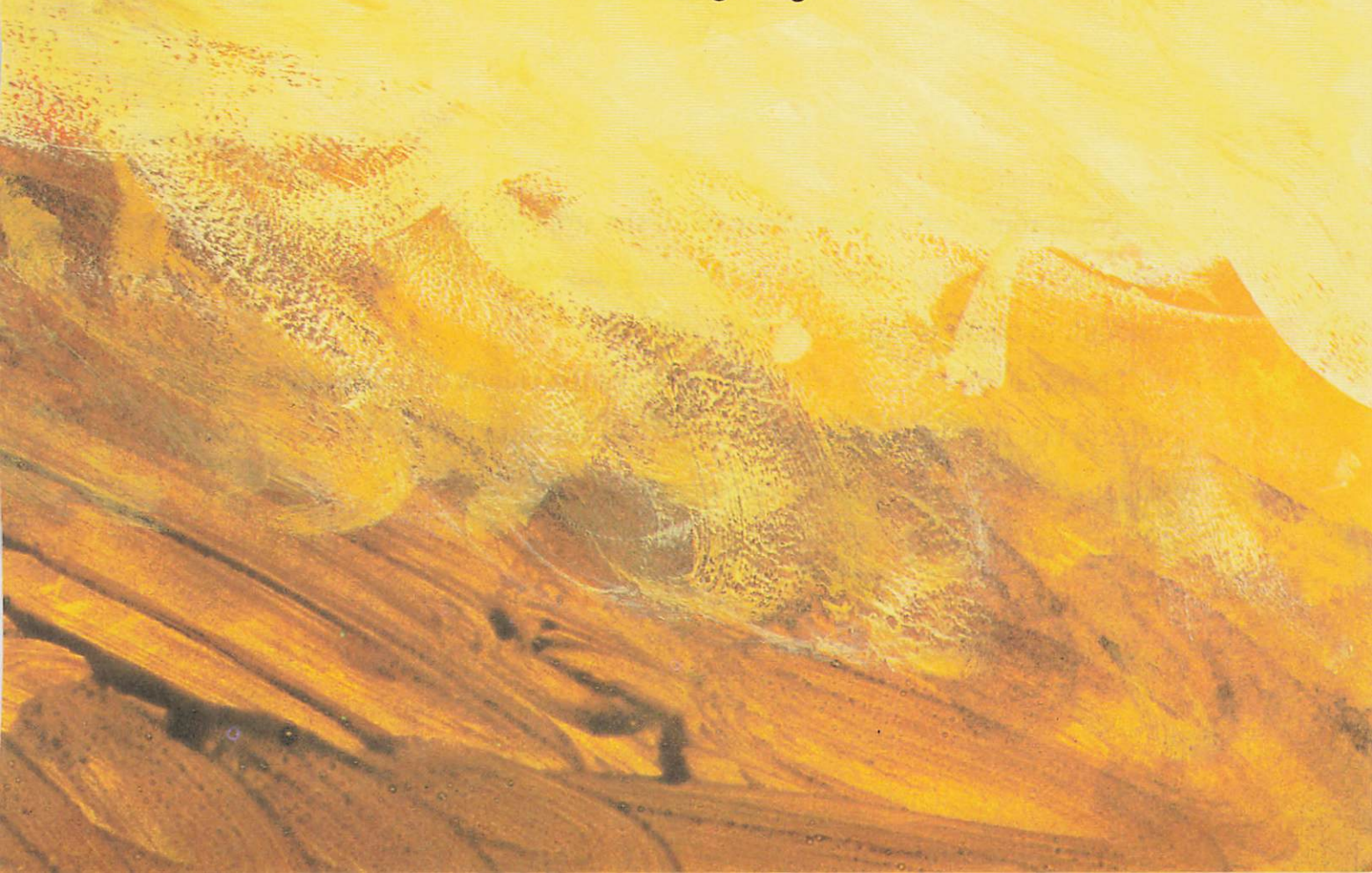
Beneath her paws the skin was smooth; each paw was like a soft black leather glove. But they were meant for climbing trees, not for jagged rocks on dusty roads.

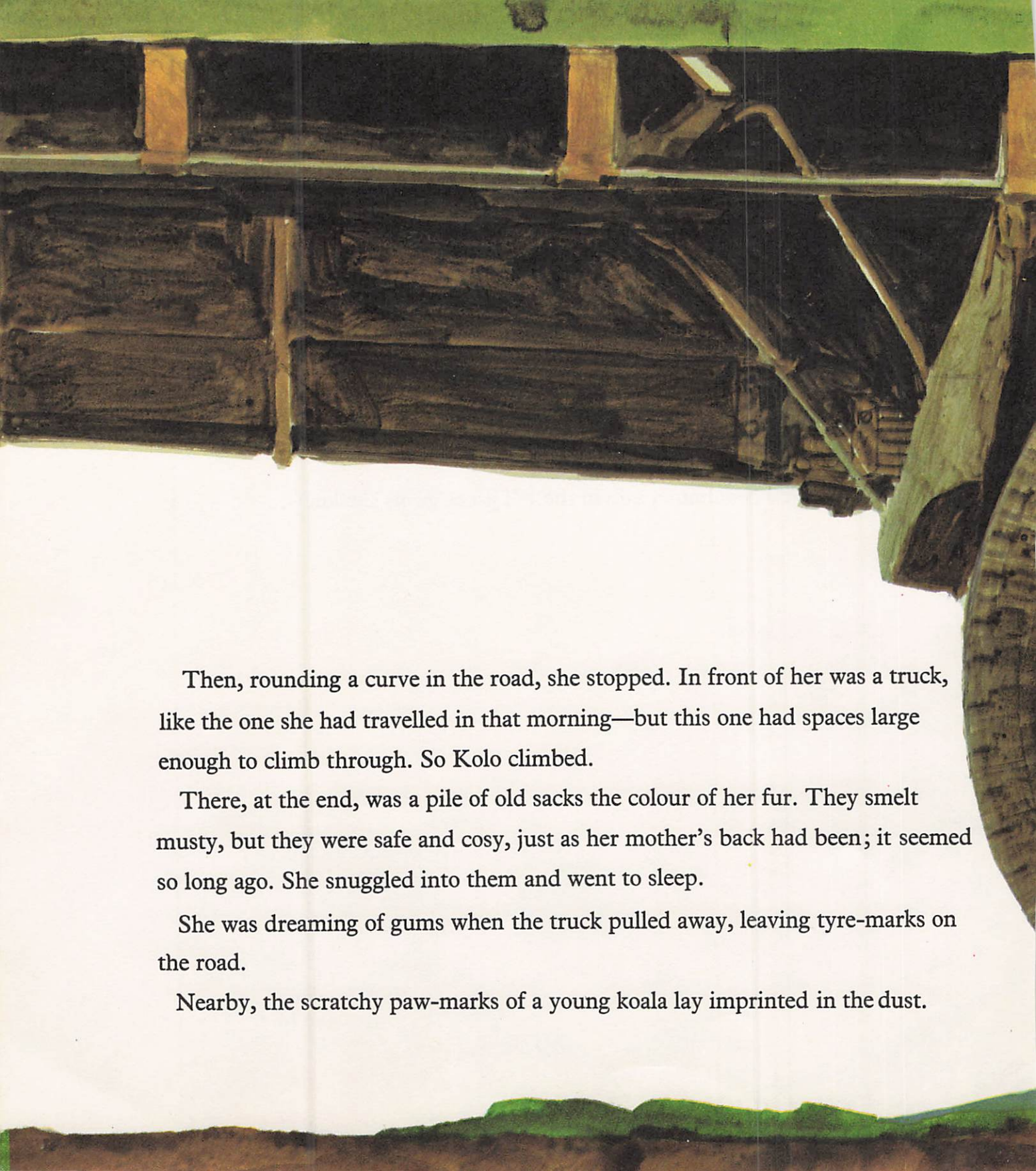
Her night-seeing eyes watered in the light of day, her claws scratched and skidded on the surface of the stones.

Then a car, speeding by, sent her scudding off the road and left her standing in a thick little cloud of dust.

The road spread like a long brown ribbon ahead of her; no matter how far she went, it always seemed the same.

She longed for a new home, safe in the tall green gums she knew.





Then, rounding a curve in the road, she stopped. In front of her was a truck, like the one she had travelled in that morning—but this one had spaces large enough to climb through. So Kolo climbed.

There, at the end, was a pile of old sacks the colour of her fur. They smelt musty, but they were safe and cosy, just as her mother's back had been; it seemed so long ago. She snuggled into them and went to sleep.

She was dreaming of gums when the truck pulled away, leaving tyre-marks on the road.

Nearby, the scratchy paw-marks of a young koala lay imprinted in the dust.





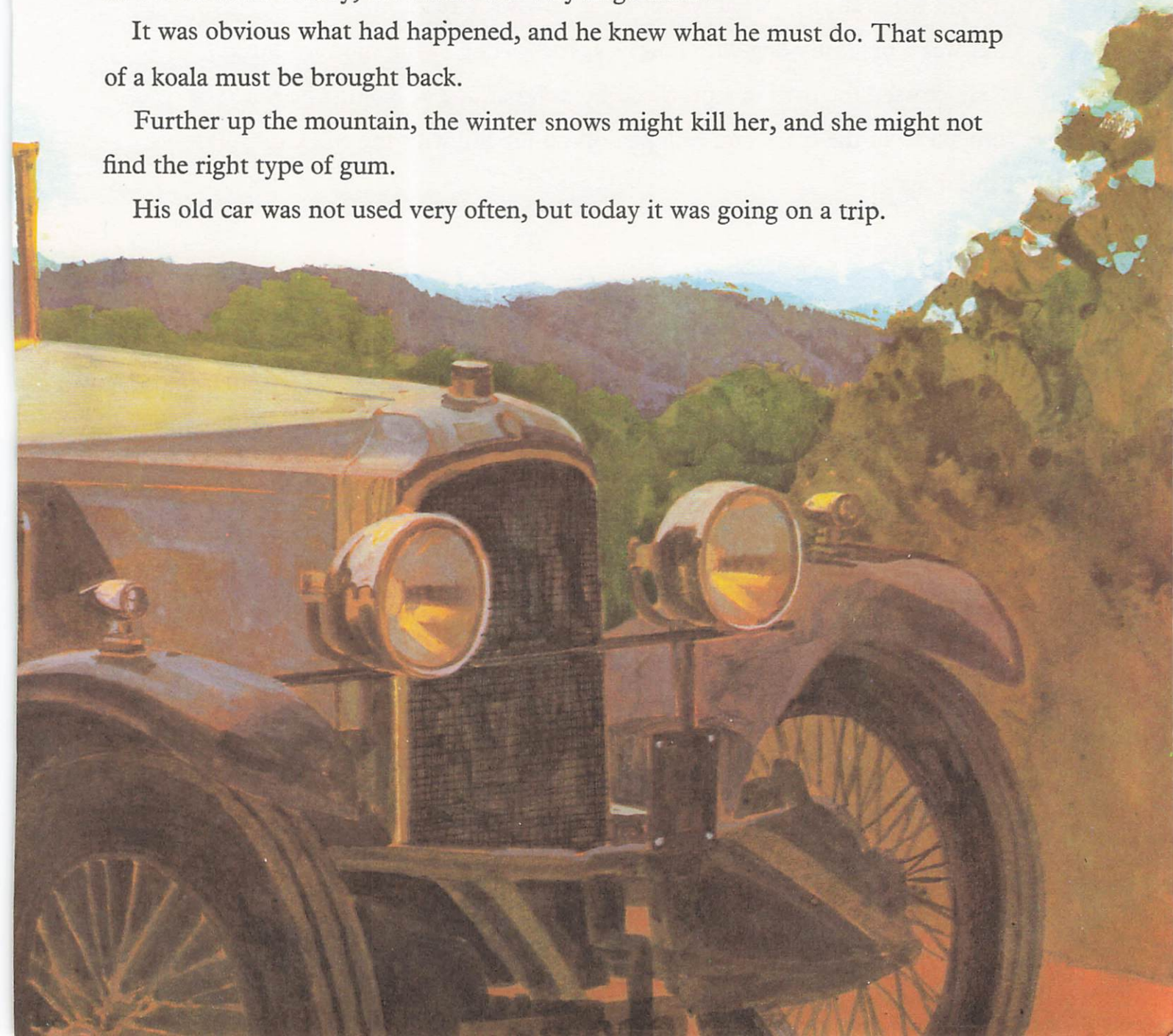
Back at the cottage, Joe woke up in the sleepy afternoon and realized that Kolo was gone.

He searched the yard, then went up on the road, where he soon found her tracks in the dust and nearby, the marks of a very large truck.

It was obvious what had happened, and he knew what he must do. That scamp of a koala must be brought back.

Further up the mountain, the winter snows might kill her, and she might not find the right type of gum.

His old car was not used very often, but today it was going on a trip.

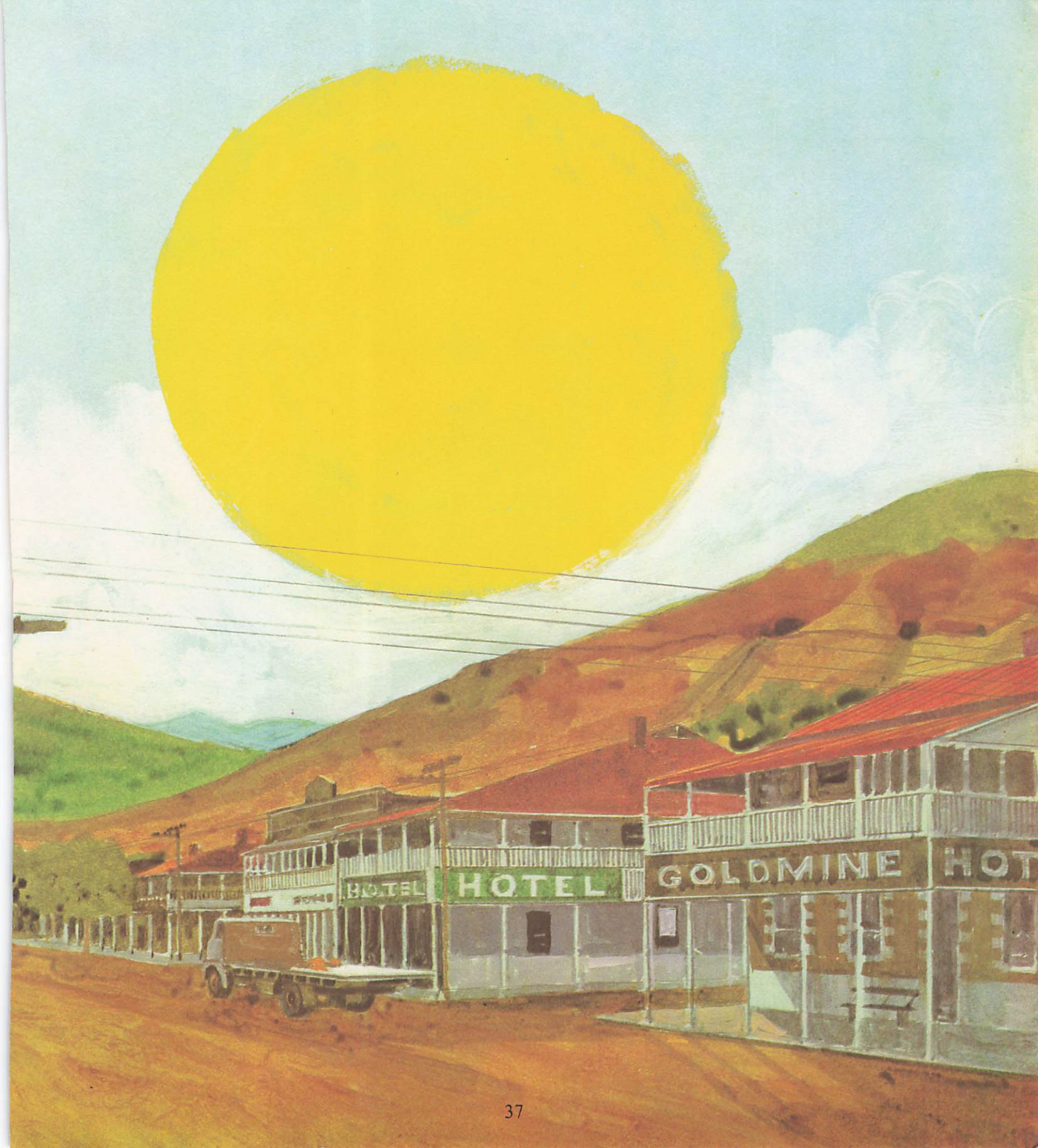


When Kolo woke up, the truck had stopped. The driver was walking into a building marked HOTEL. She wriggled from the sacks and was halfway to the ground when she saw what was coming across the road.

It was a big fluffy dog with long, soft fur—a dog of the snows, a husky.

He crossed the road in a practised bound, barking at Kolo as he ran. She jumped from the truck and galloped off up the hill with the white dog close behind her.







There were still deep holes pitting the hillside, left by the miners of a hundred years before.

There were signs to show how dangerous they were—but Kolo could not read.

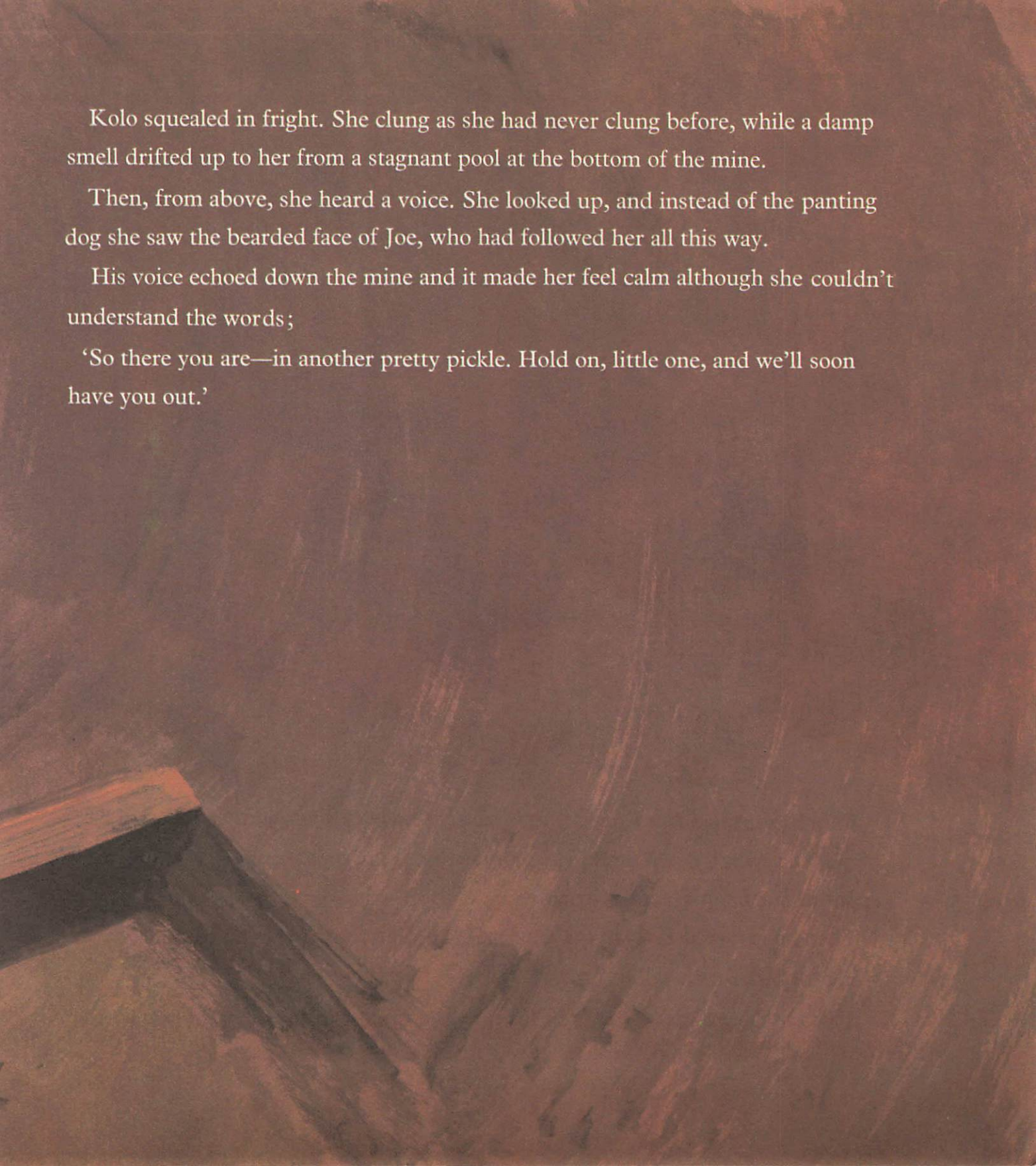
She heard the panting of the big white dog, and she slipped quickly under the warning sign—and *fell!*—this time into the deep cold darkness of an old gold mine!

One uncertain step and the world went tumbling, her claws went scrambling; then her body stopped falling, and she clung for dear life to a beam across the mine.

Above her, the shadow of the big white dog was silhouetted against the sky.





The background is a dark, mottled brown with visible vertical and diagonal streaks, suggesting a rough, possibly stone or wood-textured surface. In the bottom left corner, there is a dark, rectangular wooden beam or ledge, partially cut off by the edge of the frame.

Kolo squealed in fright. She clung as she had never clung before, while a damp smell drifted up to her from a stagnant pool at the bottom of the mine.

Then, from above, she heard a voice. She looked up, and instead of the panting dog she saw the bearded face of Joe, who had followed her all this way.

His voice echoed down the mine and it made her feel calm although she couldn't understand the words;

'So there you are—in another pretty pickle. Hold on, little one, and we'll soon have you out.'



Joe's legs came down from the top, then his body, supported by a rope. Old as he was, he swung down there. He had persuaded the men up above that only he could rescue his frightened little friend.

Then he gathered Kolo in his arms and signalled for the rope to be pulled, while the other men held it firm from above.

This time she didn't struggle. This time she relaxed in the safety of his arms.



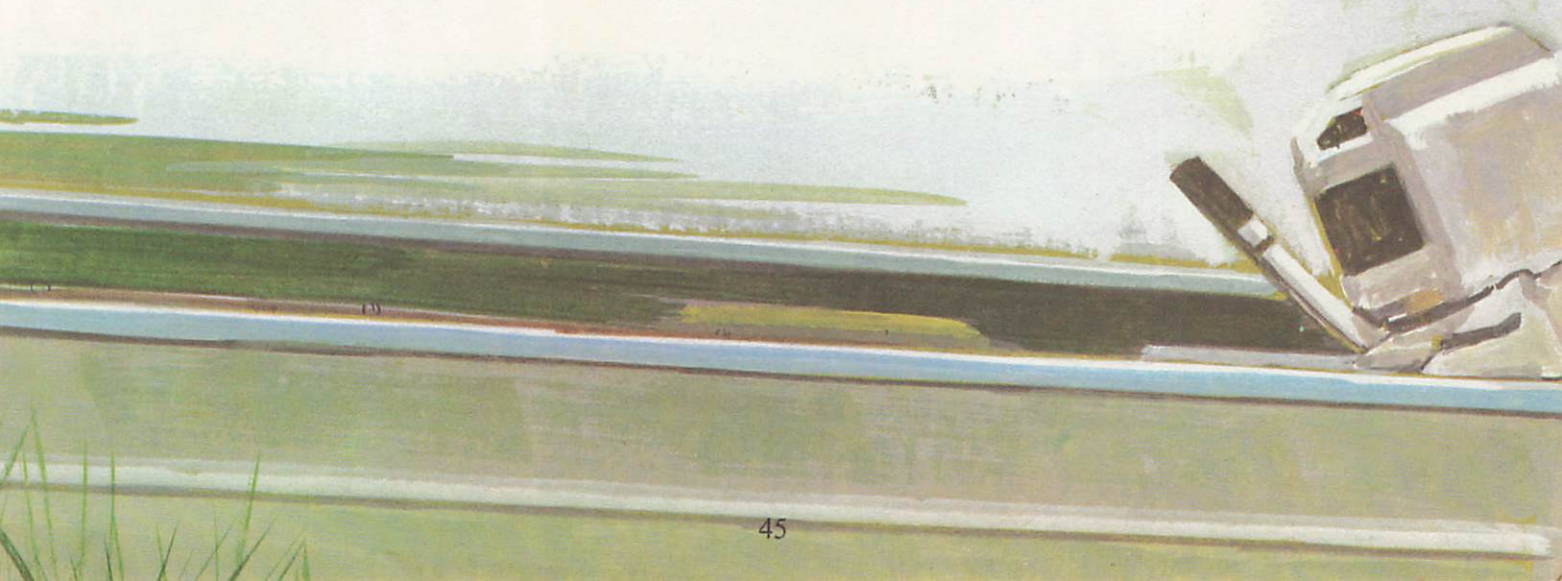




‘Now you’re coming along with me,’ Joe told Kolo firmly when they were safe in the open air above. ‘I’m taking you down to the island myself. No more running away for you.’

‘I understand what it’s like to be moved,’ he told her as they drove back down the mountain in his old car

‘They moved my house and I had no choice,’ he told her as he placed her gently in his boat.



‘But I was old. It was harder for me. You’re young; you’ll start a new life out here,’ he assured Kolo, as he lifted her carefully on to a tall gum, where leaves hung down all round in a juicy tempting curtain.

‘—And don’t forget, you’ll be living near my old home.’





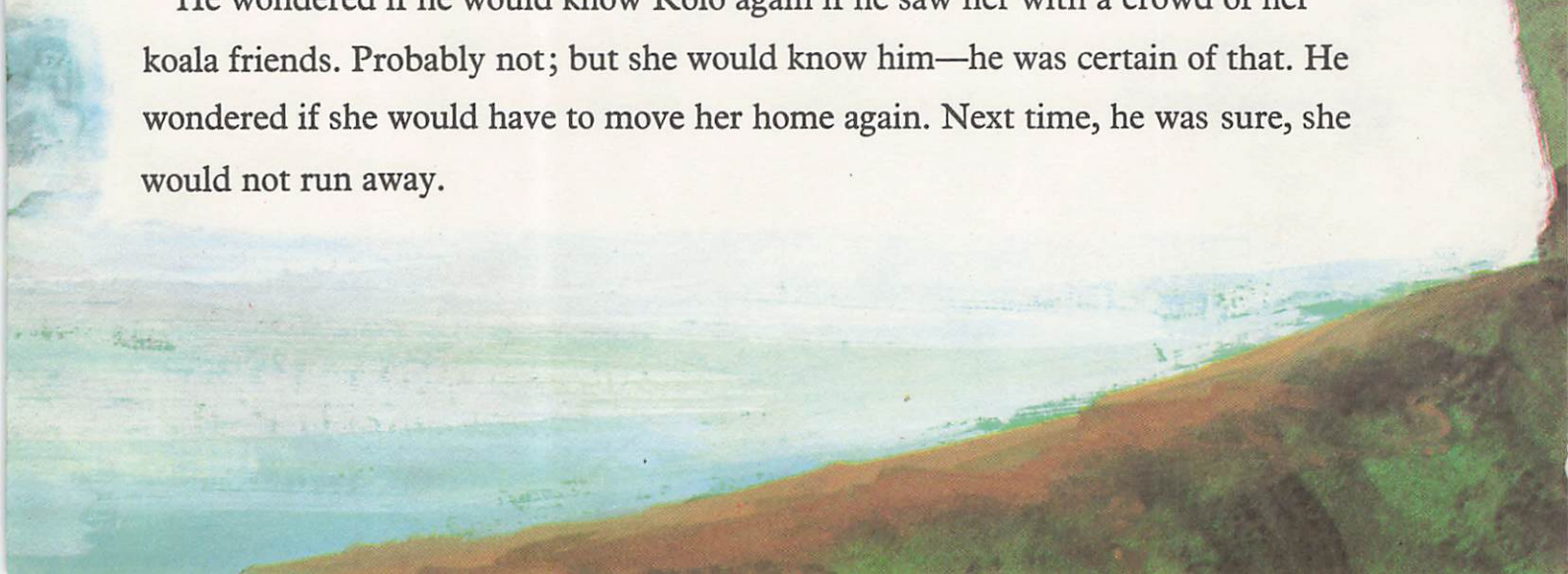




The old man's back hurt as he bent to pull the boat into deeper water. It had been an exhausting day for a man who was supposed to have retired.

Suddenly he felt very alone. He hoped to spend the rest of his days looking out over the island, and it would be good to know he had a friend living there, for a little while, at least.

He wondered if he would know Kolo again if he saw her with a crowd of her koala friends. Probably not; but she would know him—he was certain of that. He wondered if she would have to move her home again. Next time, he was sure, she would not run away.



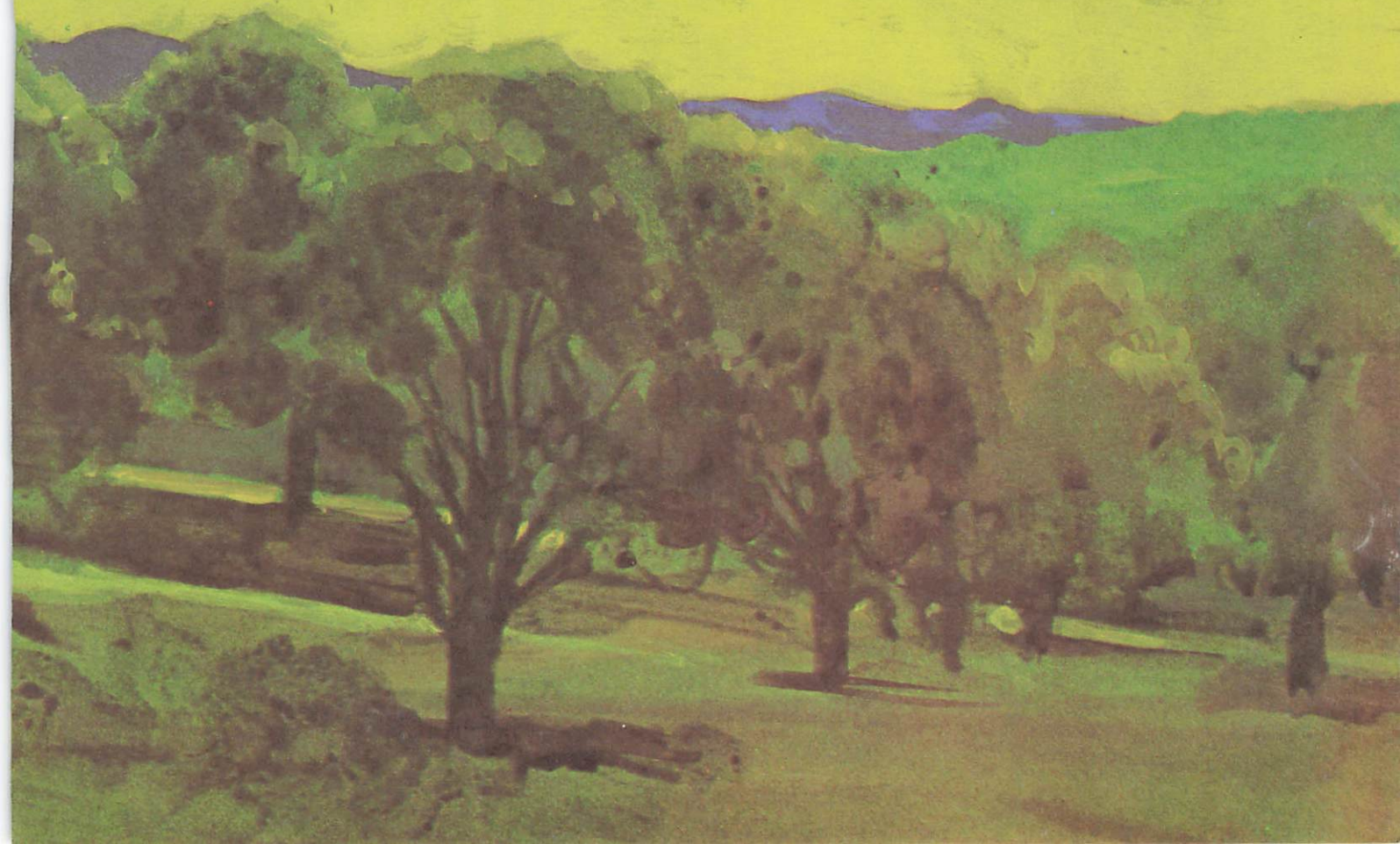


As Joe's boat chugged away from the island, he looked back and saw movement among the trees, as the wallabies, emus and koalas moved about in their new home. And above his outboard motor he imagined he could hear grunting coughs, the unmistakable sounds of koalas talking to one another.

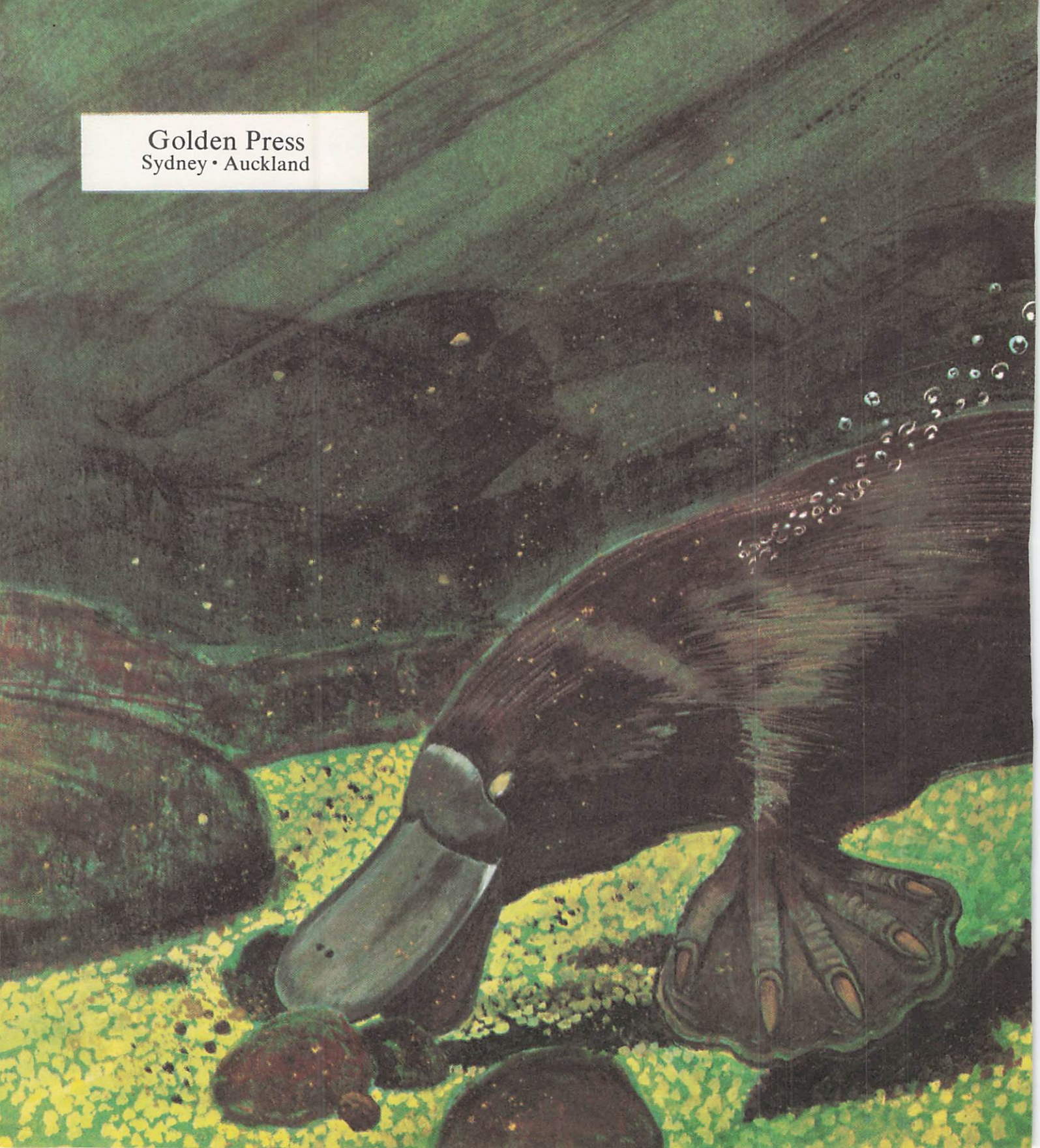
KOLO WAS THE NAME KOALAS WERE CALLED BY THE ABORIGINES.

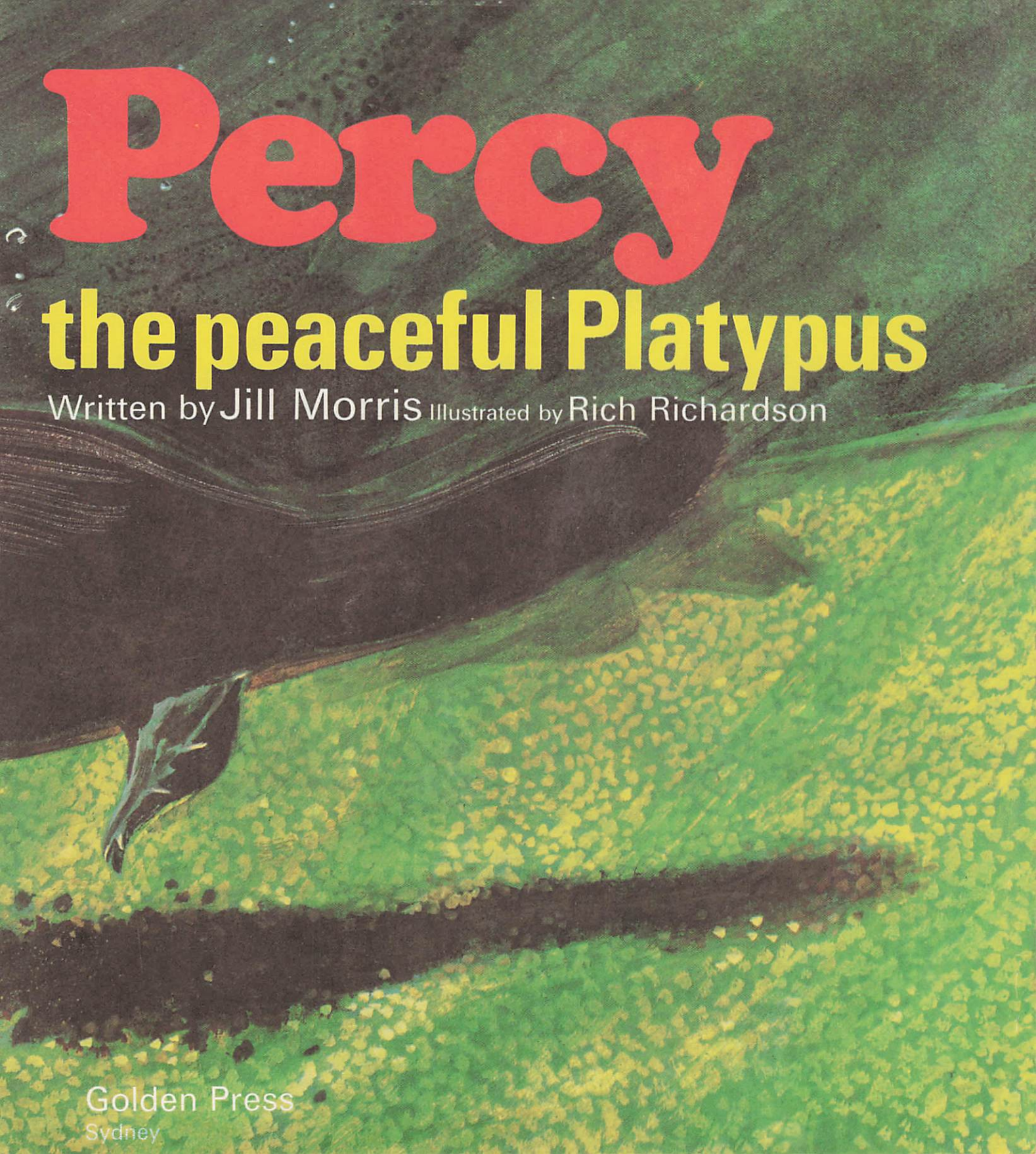
IT MEANS AN ANIMAL THAT CAN LIVE WITHOUT DRINKING WATER.

INSTEAD THE KOALA OBTAINS ENOUGH MOISTURE FROM DEW AND GUM-LEAVES.



Golden Press
Sydney • Auckland





Percy

the peaceful Platypus

Written by Jill Morris Illustrated by Rich Richardson

Golden Press
Sydney



That winter, in a quiet corner of Australia, a mother platypus dug a special nesting-burrow at the end of a long winding tunnel beside a quiet pool.

In a warm safe place with a high rounded roof she made a damp nest of grass, leaves and willow-roots. There in the little nest she laid two creamy-white leathery eggs which were lightly joined together. She placed them on her broad flat tail, curled the rest of her body around them, and there she stayed for two weeks, until it was time for her babies to hatch out of their shells.





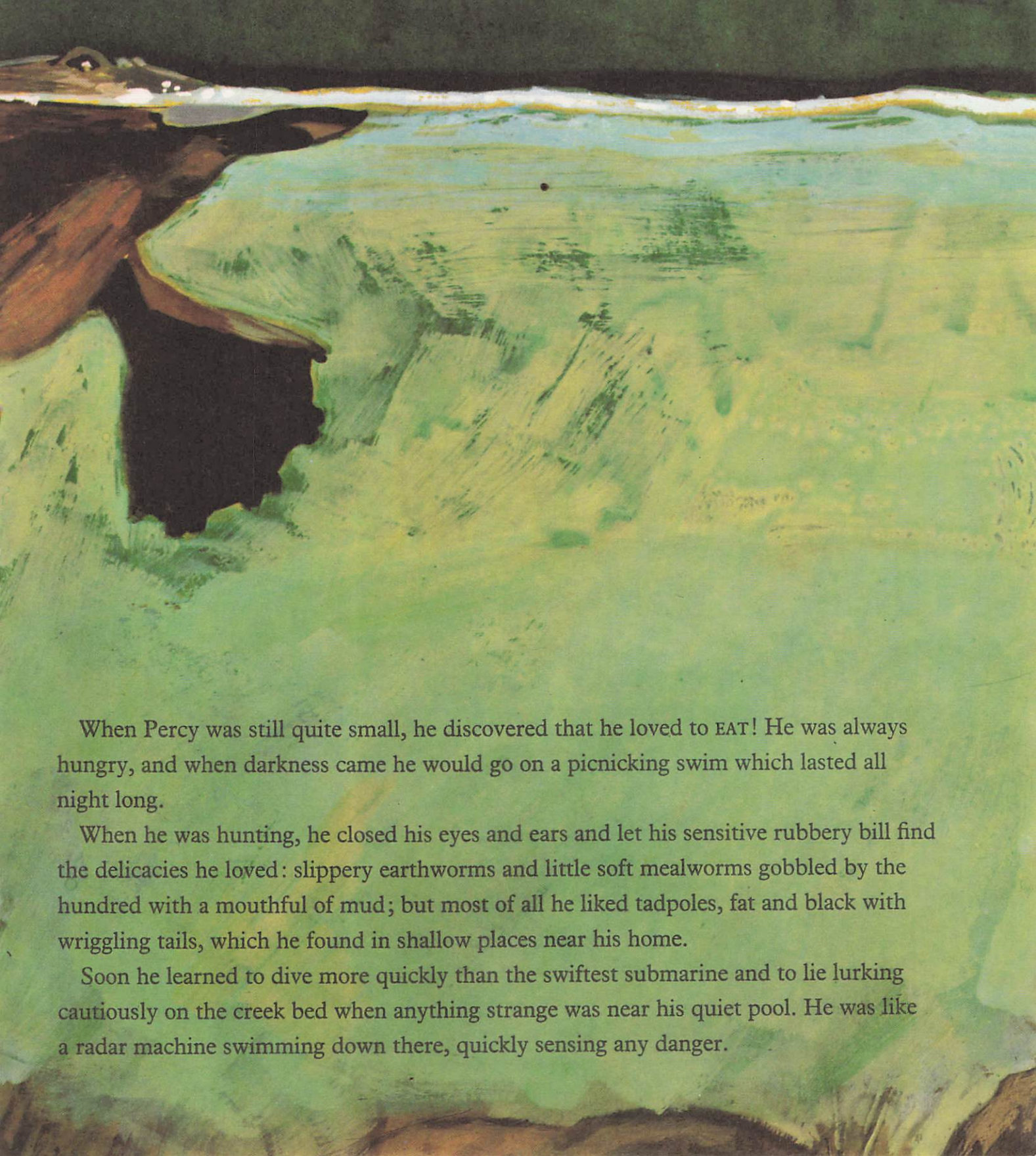
Percy was the first. A small soft head with a rubbery bill, he pushed his way out of the broken shell. He had no fur and he could not see, but his flippers scratched at the sides of the shell until he was free.

His mother nudged him gently with her bill then turned to his sister, who was busily breaking out of the shell beside him.

They were only baby platypuses, but they had a great deal to learn before they could move in and out of the nesting-burrow and learn to swim on their own in the pool outside.



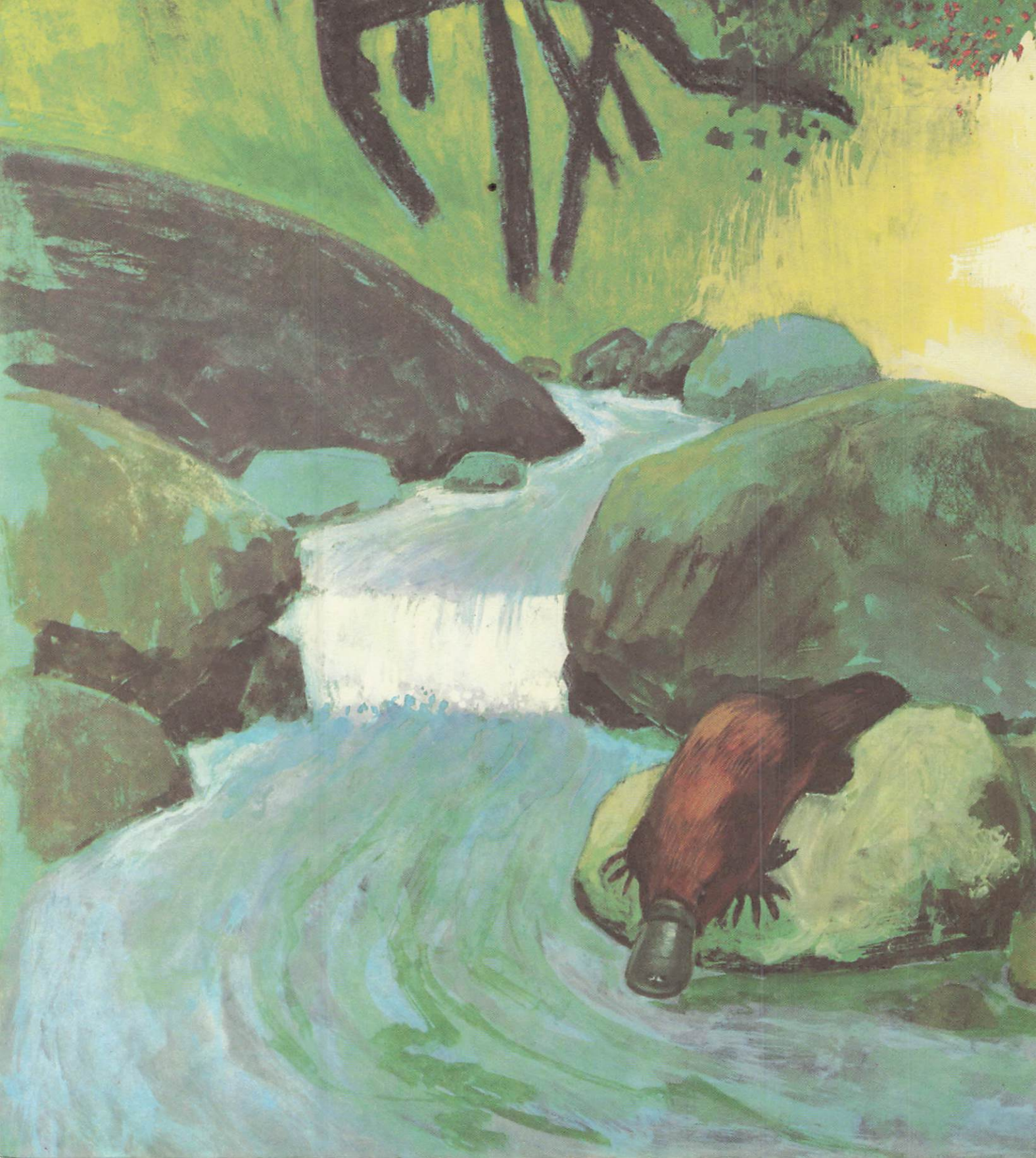




When Percy was still quite small, he discovered that he loved to EAT! He was always hungry, and when darkness came he would go on a picnicking swim which lasted all night long.

When he was hunting, he closed his eyes and ears and let his sensitive rubbery bill find the delicacies he loved: slippery earthworms and little soft mealworms gobbled by the hundred with a mouthful of mud; but most of all he liked tadpoles, fat and black with wriggling tails, which he found in shallow places near his home.

Soon he learned to dive more quickly than the swiftest submarine and to lie lurking cautiously on the creek bed when anything strange was near his quiet pool. He was like a radar machine swimming down there, quickly sensing any danger.

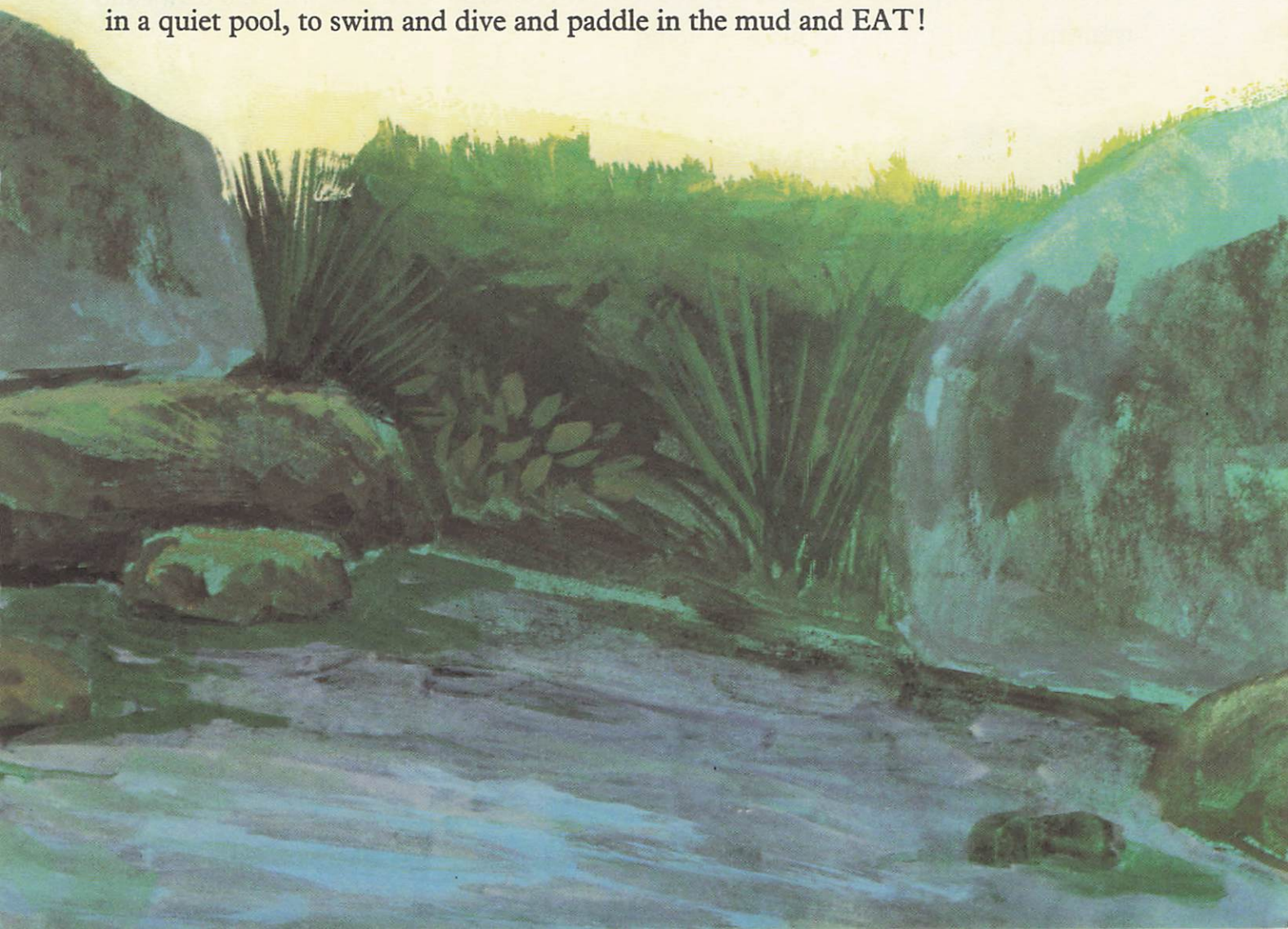


By the time Percy was almost fully grown, his long thin body was covered in dark brown fur; underneath his body the fur was a silvery grey.

On each of his four feet, the toes were joined by webbing which spread out when he was swimming, like an open fan. But when he walked on land, the webbing on his front feet was folded back, so that he looked as if he might be going backwards!

For Percy could swim in water, like a fish, or walk on dry land, like a lizard. He could burrow like a wombat and he had fur like a kangaroo or a possum. And yet he had come from an egg!

He was such a mixture of other animals that people had been wondering about his family for a very long time; but Percy did not care. All he wanted was to live peacefully in a quiet pool, to swim and dive and paddle in the mud and EAT!



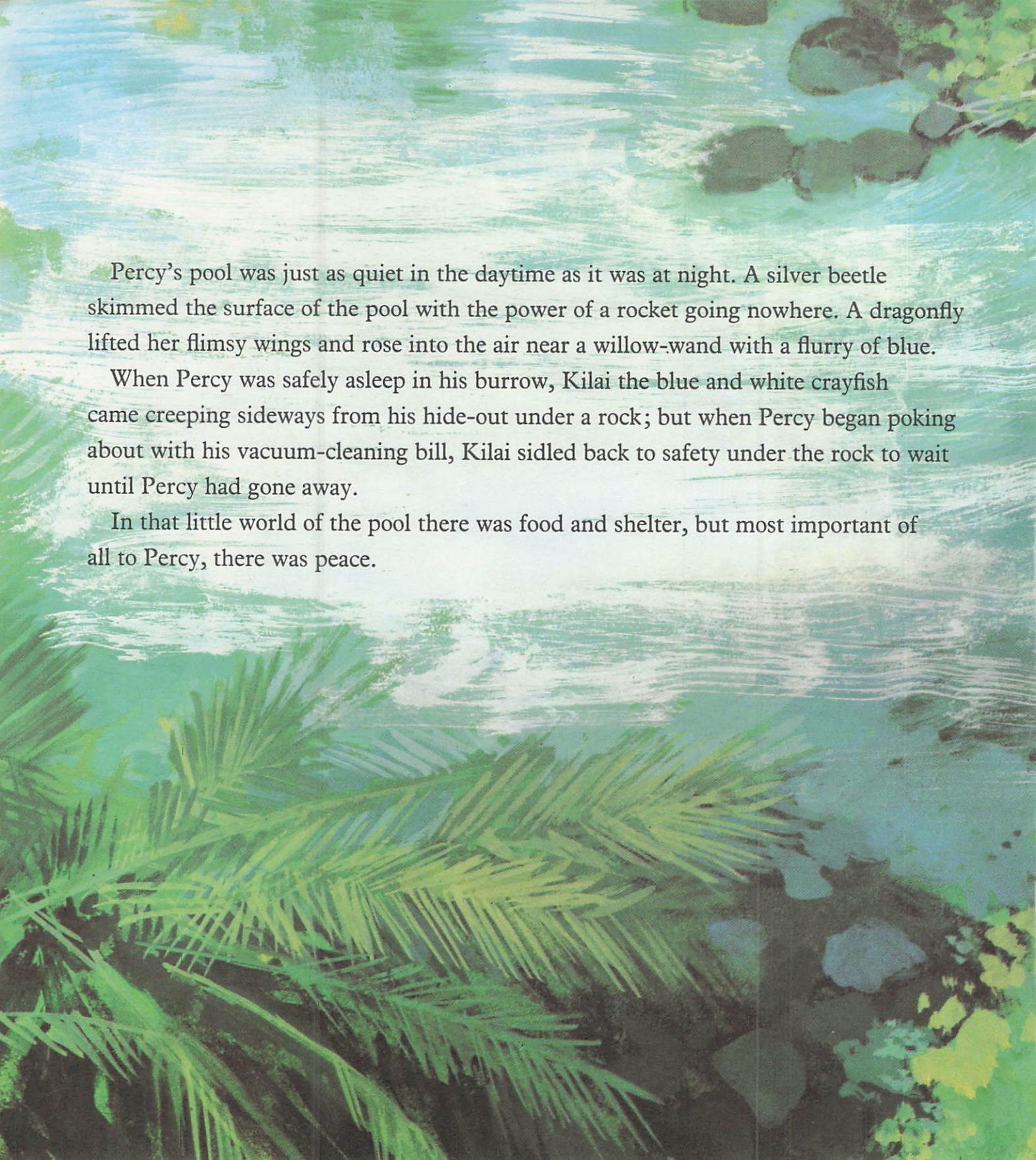
Then came the day when it was time for Percy to leave his mother's burrow and travel upstream to dig his own. After a long hunt he found the perfect place, a pool well hidden by overhanging trees.

Somehow he knew just where to dig. Using his stiffened bill as a shovel and his sharp little claws as a rake, he scratched his way along until he had made a long, safe tunnel where he could hide from danger, enemies and noise. When he had finished, the entrance was so small you would never have suspected that Percy could fit inside.

Then he went out for a moonlight swim in the pool and had a tasty meal. Plenty of worms—yes, this was the perfect place to live. He combed his fur with his claws and went to bed for the day in his new home.





The background of the page is a painting of a pond. In the foreground, there are large, green lily pads with prominent veins. To the right, there are reeds or tall grasses. The water is depicted with soft, blended strokes of blue and green, suggesting a calm surface. In the upper right corner, there are some dark, rounded shapes that could be rocks or more lily pads.

Percy's pool was just as quiet in the daytime as it was at night. A silver beetle skimmed the surface of the pool with the power of a rocket going nowhere. A dragonfly lifted her flimsy wings and rose into the air near a willow-wand with a flurry of blue.

When Percy was safely asleep in his burrow, Kilai the blue and white crayfish came creeping sideways from his hide-out under a rock; but when Percy began poking about with his vacuum-cleaning bill, Kilai sidled back to safety under the rock to wait until Percy had gone away.

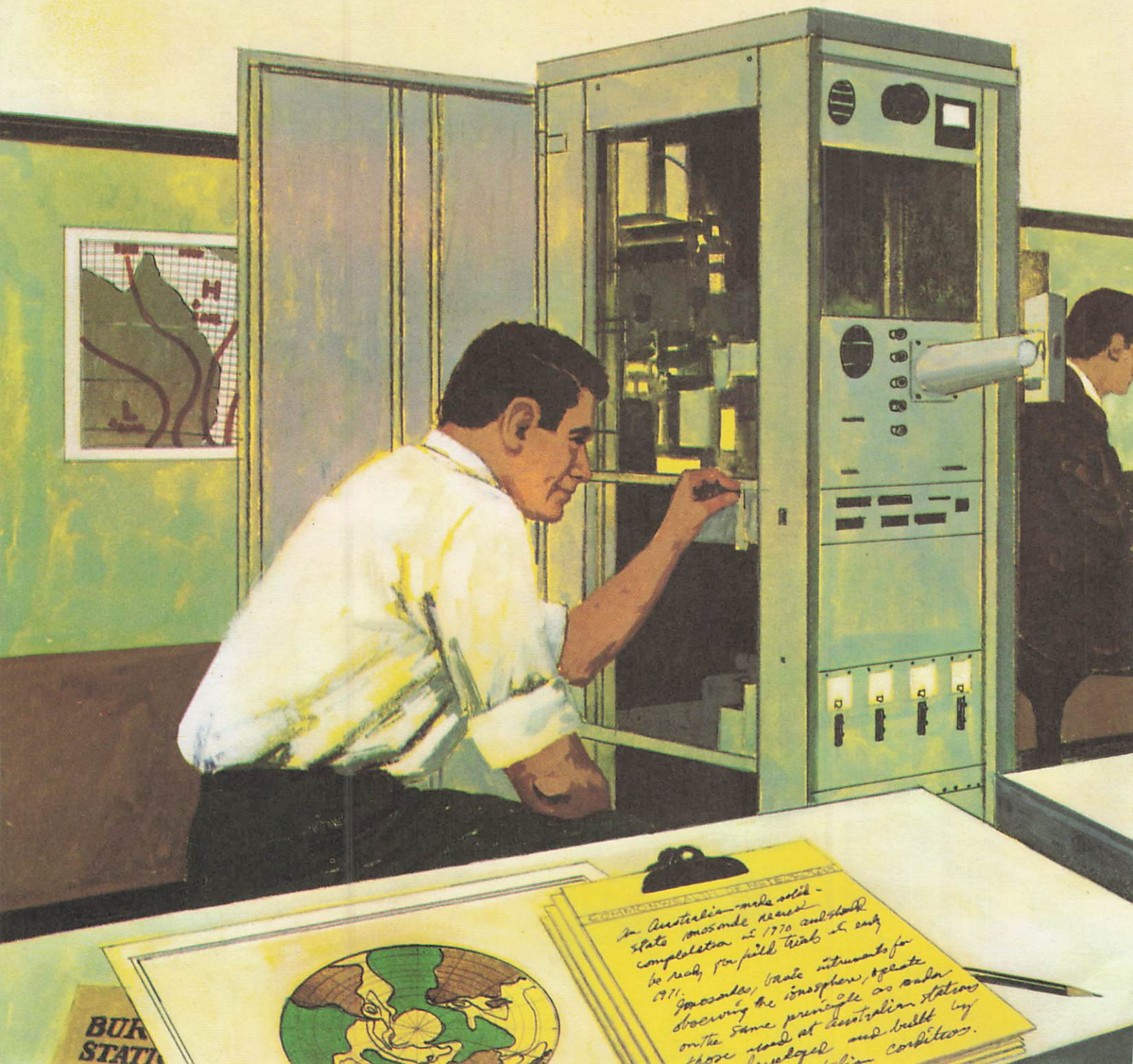
In that little world of the pool there was food and shelter, but most important of all to Percy, there was peace.

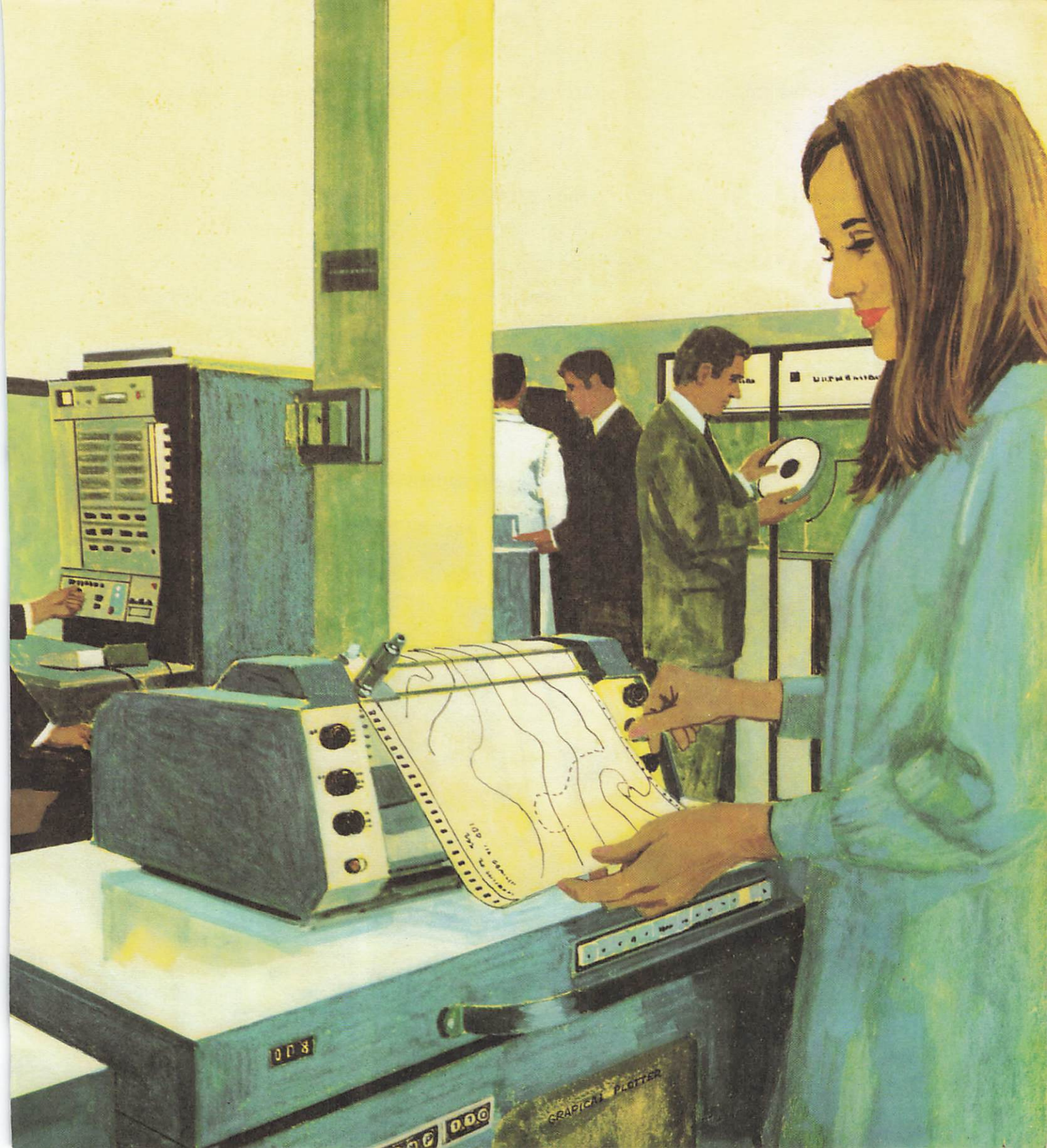


One day, Percy's peace was disturbed.

Outside, many miles away, something was brewing in the air. Satellites in space warned of the coming of a storm. Weathermen watched its progress carefully.

In their homes, children watched the barometer needles falling.



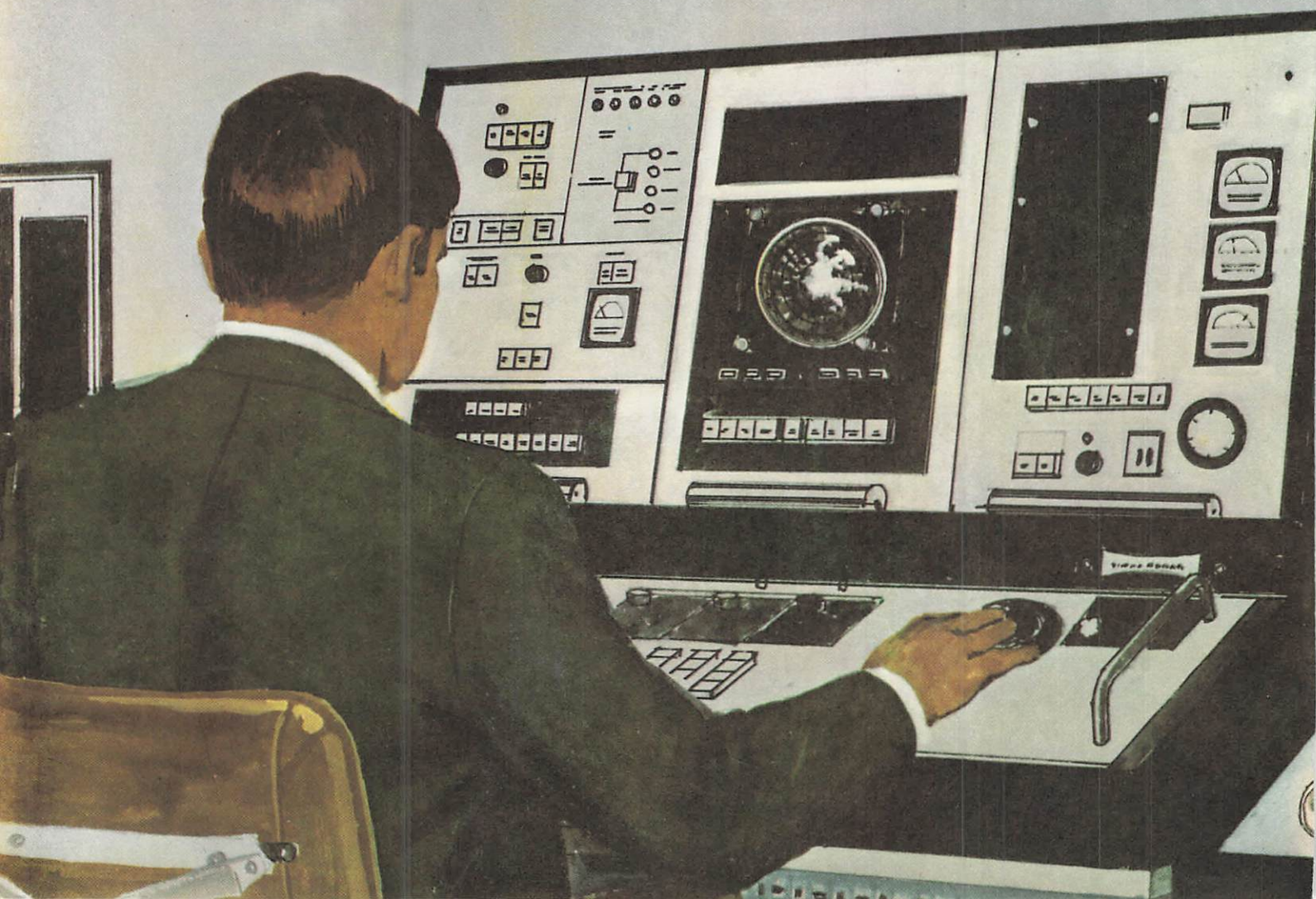


Then a round pattern of wind and rain, whirling in a circle, began to show up on radar screens along the coast.

A Cyclone!

Once they knew she was coming, they gave her the name of a girl: 'Sally'. Children were sent home early from school. Shops were shut and offices were closed. Radio programmes were interrupted with the special sound: BREEP—BREEP—BREEP—

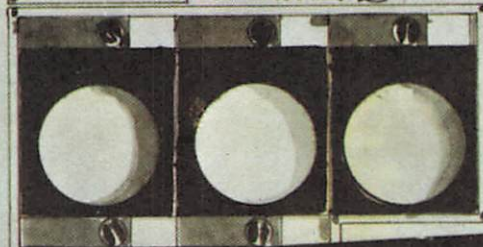
The radar warning system sent the message flashing down the coast. *Cyclone Sally* was on her way!



COMMONWEALTH BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY



The November and June data will be used to compare the entire atmosphere twice daily through the 200 mb constant pressure level. Extra observations were collected from aircraft, more than 40,000 for alone. This task was split



PSD are prominent in the work of a number of organisations and regularly represent the seas meetings.



The November and June data will be used to compare the entire atmosphere twice daily through the 200 mb constant pressure level. Extra observations were collected from aircraft, more than 40,000 for alone. This task was split



THE WEATHER BUREAU'S NAMES FOR THE CYCLONE SEASON ARE:

AGGIE
DORA
GERTIE
IDA
LENA
MOYA
RACHEL
SALLY
TANIA
WANDA



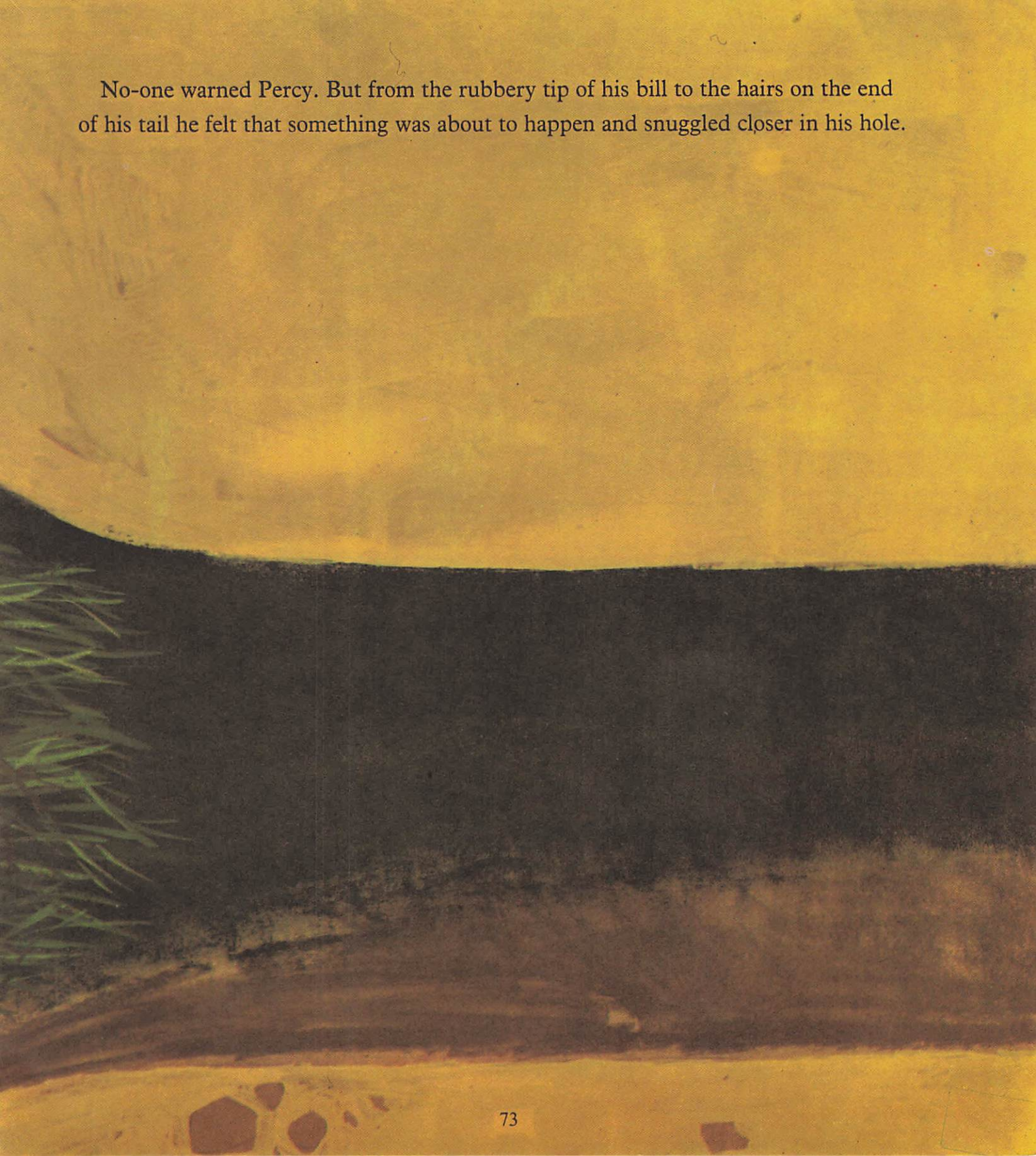
Then, whirling in at ninety miles an hour, the cyclone struck! Sally spiralled from place to place, shaking houses to their foundations, lifting roofs, bending huge trees like old men hobbling on a windy day.

The sea, whipped up by gale-force winds, flung its waves like weapons at the shore. Seagulls hid from their fury and the beach became a battle-ground.





No-one warned Percy. But from the rubbery tip of his bill to the hairs on the end of his tail he felt that something was about to happen and snuggled closer in his hole.





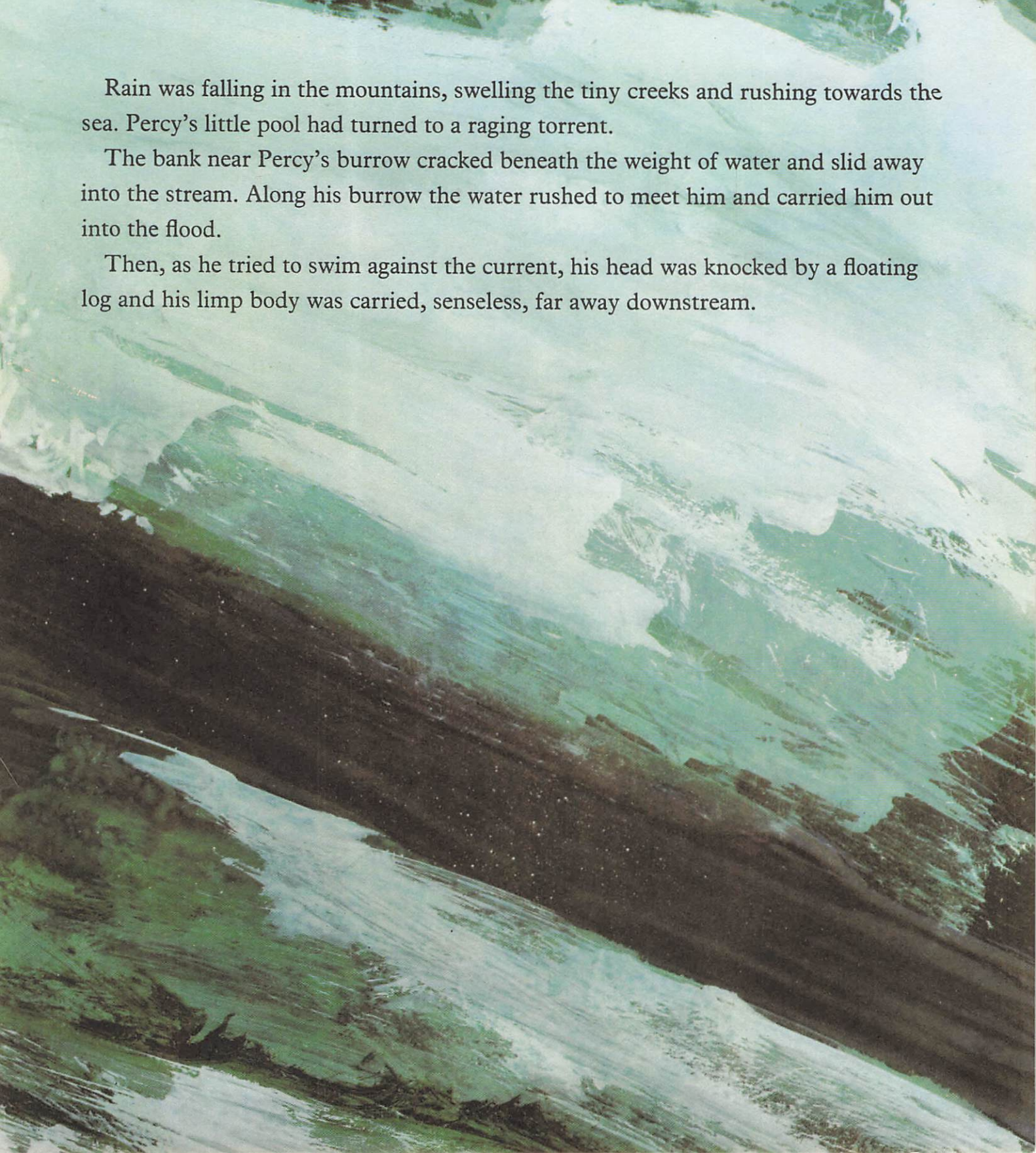
And then, as quickly as she had come, Sally blew herself out to sea and finally disappeared somewhere out there above the waves.

But now, after her, came the rain. Even the children helped in the rush to save the stock from the approaching floodwaters.

FLOOD!







Rain was falling in the mountains, swelling the tiny creeks and rushing towards the sea. Percy's little pool had turned to a raging torrent.

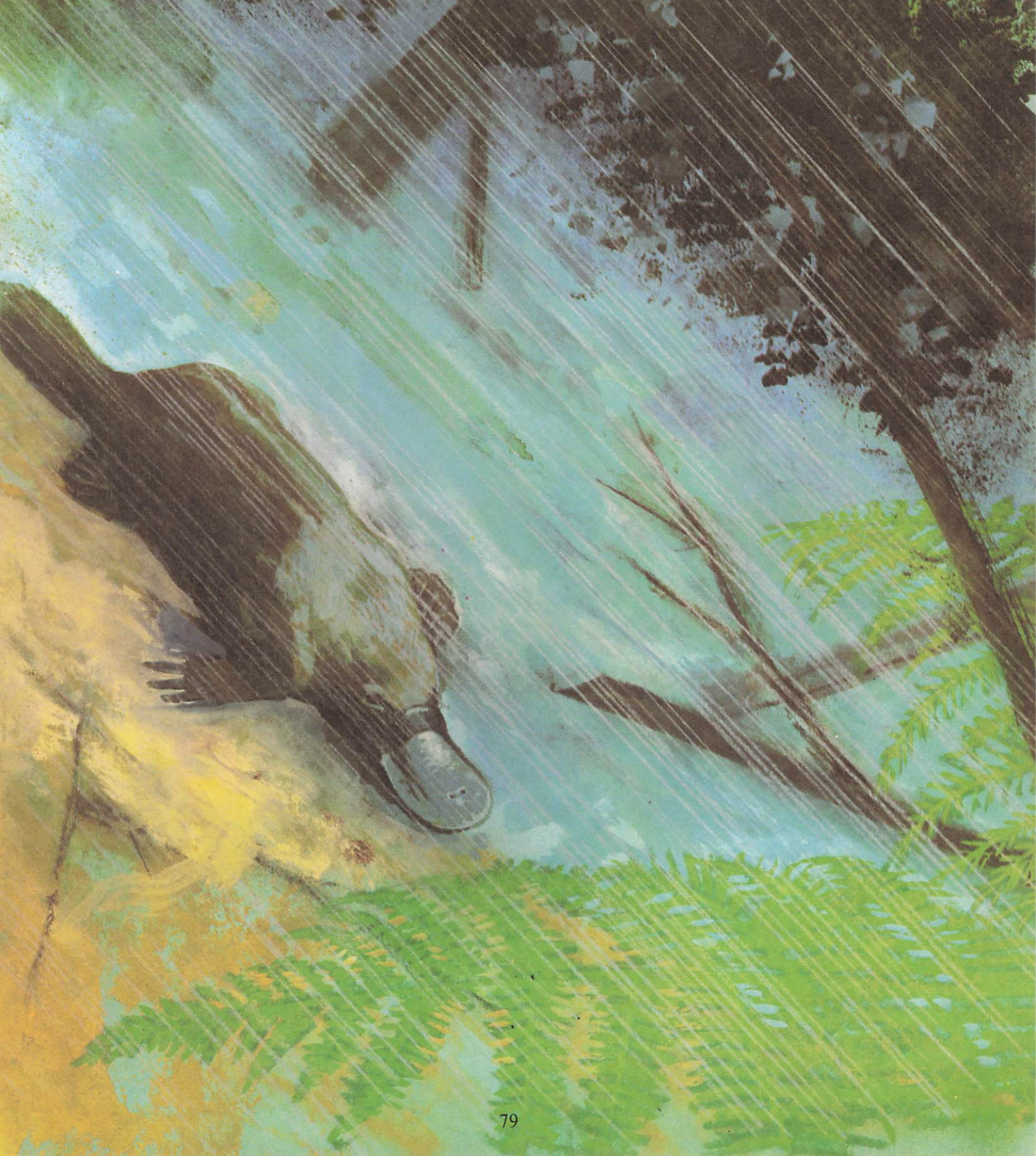
The bank near Percy's burrow cracked beneath the weight of water and slid away into the stream. Along his burrow the water rushed to meet him and carried him out into the flood.

Then, as he tried to swim against the current, his head was knocked by a floating log and his limp body was carried, senseless, far away downstream.



The little blue dragonfly lay dead in a muddy pool, her dainty wings smashed by a sudden rush of water before she could escape to shelter. The silver beetle lay helpless on his back, wondering what had happened to his world.

Downstream, where the river widened to receive the swollen creek, Percy lay where the water had carried him; too exhausted to move, he lay with his legs spread out like broken twigs, helpless, shivering, in the rain.



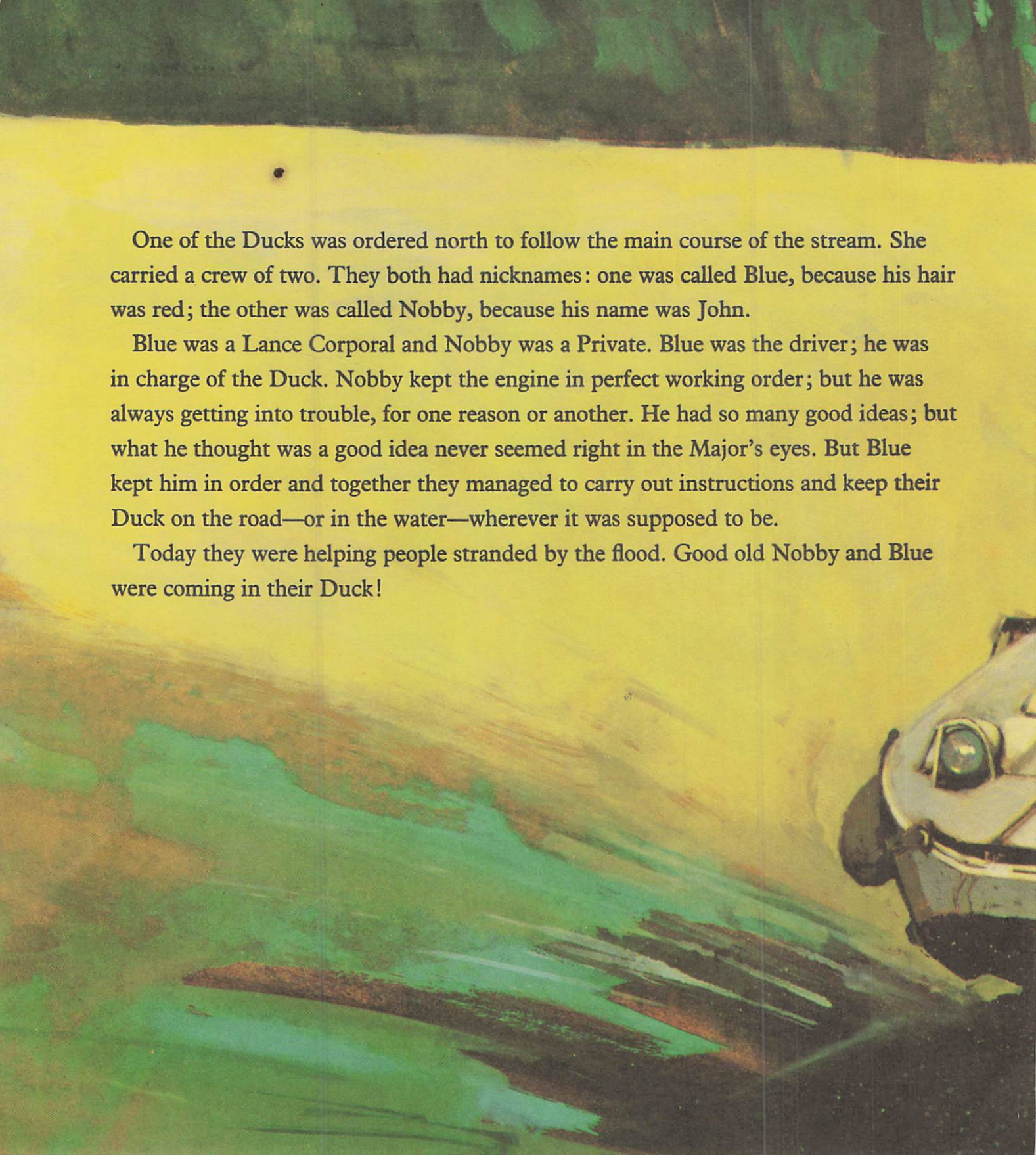
Along the reaches of the river, for people who were stranded by the floods, help was on the way.

The army had trucks which could run in water or on land—DUCKS they were called. In the pouring rain, by the river mouth, the soldiers stood at attention to receive their orders.

Operation Floodbound had begun!





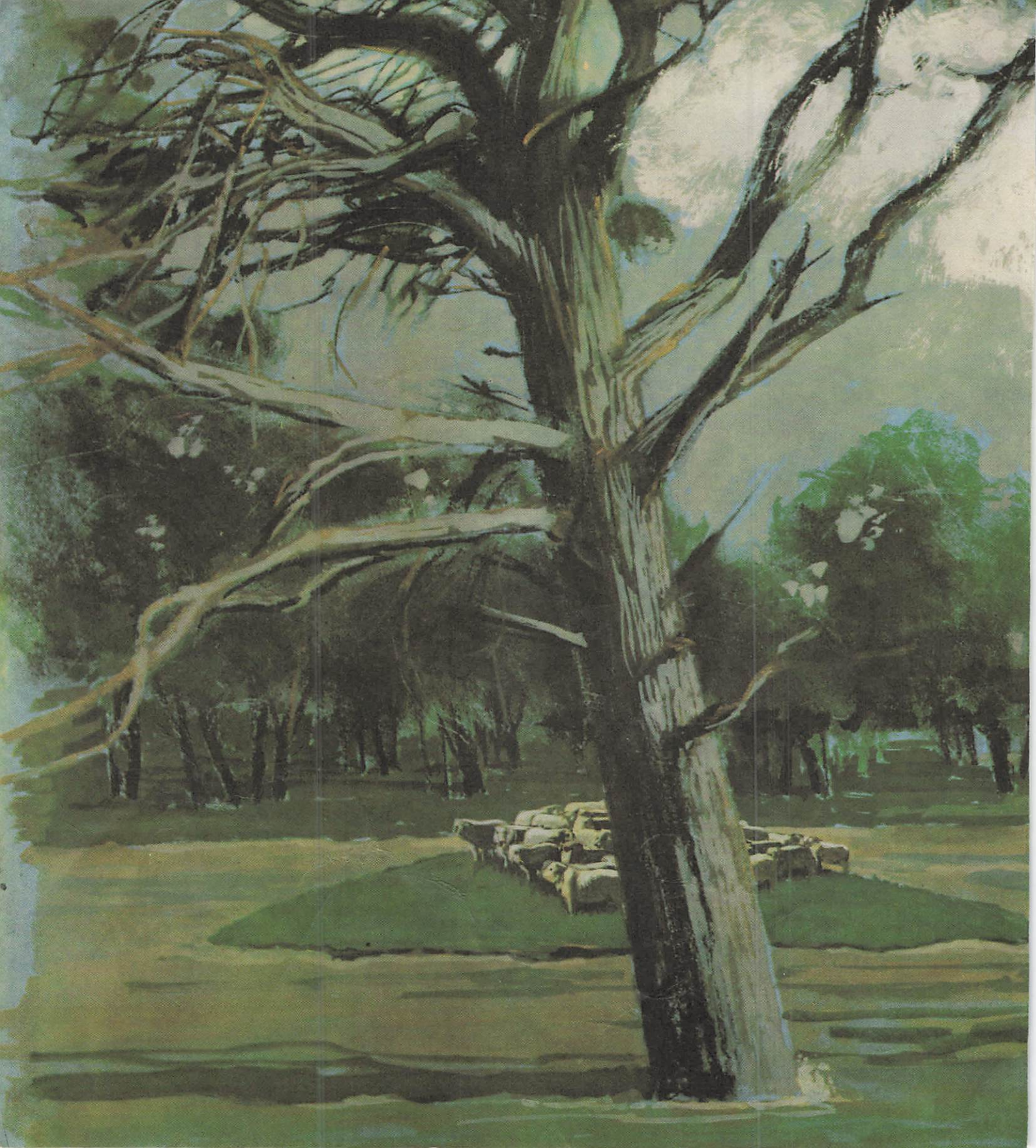
The background of the page is a painting. At the top, there are dark green, textured shapes representing trees or foliage. Below this is a wide, pale yellow area representing a river or a flooded landscape. In the bottom right corner, the front of a white boat is visible, featuring a single round headlight and a dark bumper. The water in the foreground is painted with broad, expressive strokes of green and blue, suggesting movement and reflection. The overall style is that of a classic children's book illustration.

One of the Ducks was ordered north to follow the main course of the stream. She carried a crew of two. They both had nicknames: one was called Blue, because his hair was red; the other was called Nobby, because his name was John.

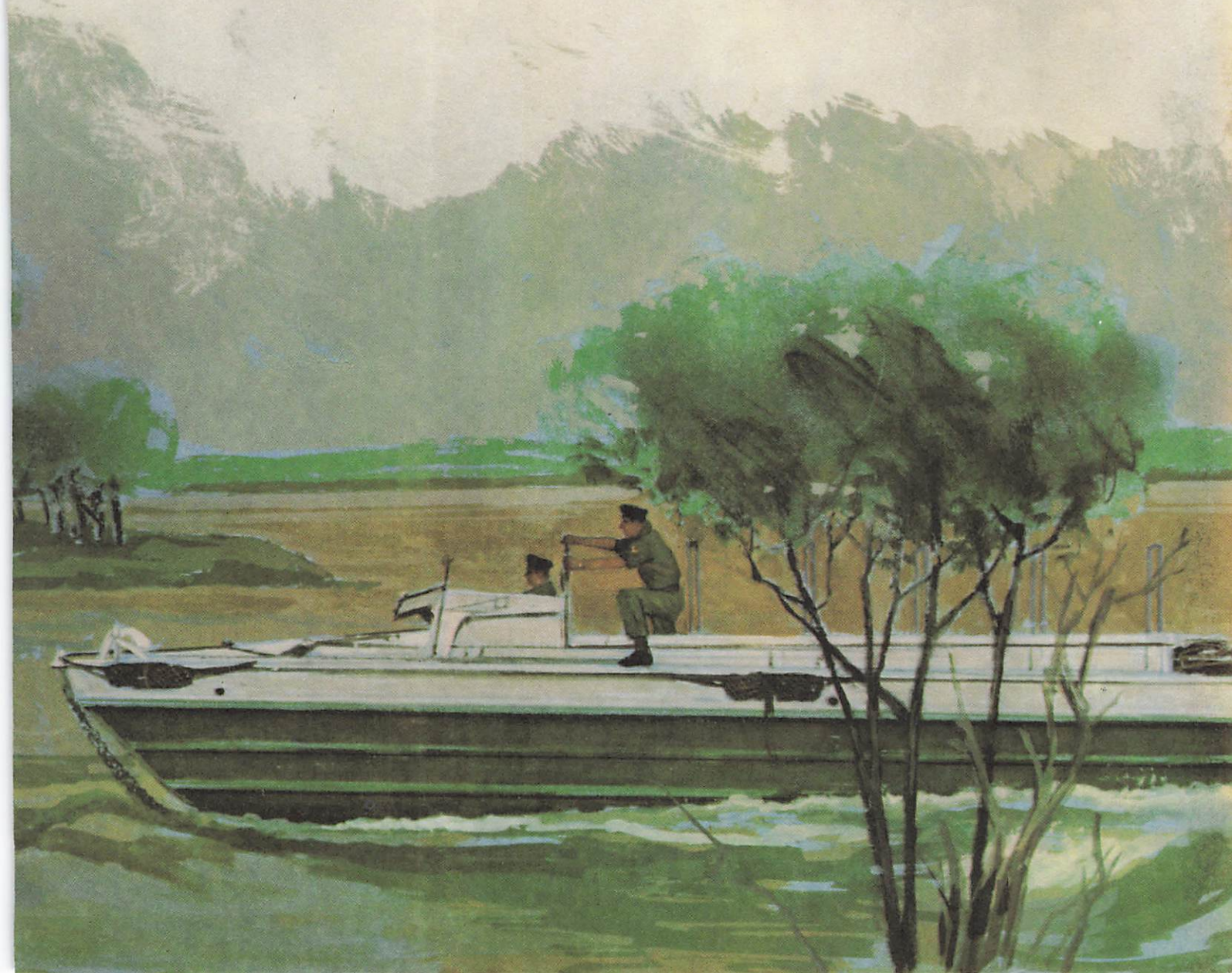
Blue was a Lance Corporal and Nobby was a Private. Blue was the driver; he was in charge of the Duck. Nobby kept the engine in perfect working order; but he was always getting into trouble, for one reason or another. He had so many good ideas; but what he thought was a good idea never seemed right in the Major's eyes. But Blue kept him in order and together they managed to carry out instructions and keep their Duck on the road—or in the water—wherever it was supposed to be.

Today they were helping people stranded by the flood. Good old Nobby and Blue were coming in their Duck!





On the way they passed some sheep, shivering in a huddle, surrounded by the flood.
'Hello there!' shouted Blue. 'We'll pick you up on the way back.'
And the Duck churned on through the sodden fields.



The Duck proceeded upstream, following the road where it could. The huge wheels stopped just short of a dark object lying in the road.

‘Better investigate’, said Blue.

Nobby vaulted over the side; but, being Nobby, he landed in the mud and was brown and dripping all over by the time he reached the shiny bundle which was Percy.

‘It’s a cat. No, it’s not—it’s a rabbit. (A *black* rabbit?) No, it’s a platypus!

‘ORNITHORHYNCHUS’, murmured Blue, who had been saving up the information for years, ever since he was eight years old and his Uncle Arthur had taught him the real name for a platypus and kept at him until he could spell it.

‘Hey!’ he called. ‘If it’s a male, watch his poison spurs at the back!’







Nobby had a good idea. He took off his cap, and wrapping it carefully round Percy's legs, he picked up the struggling bundle and carried it back to the Duck.

'Is he hurt?' asked Blue.

'No, just stunned, I think. He let me pick him up and they wouldn't normally do that.'

'Whatever are we going to do with him?' Blue wondered. 'We're supposed to be looking for people who need help.'

'And stock.'

'But this isn't stock.'

'No, but it's animal,' said Nobby, 'and it needs help.'

'Well, yes,' agreed Blue, 'but I don't think the Major would understand.'

'The Major,' said Nobby, 'will never know.'

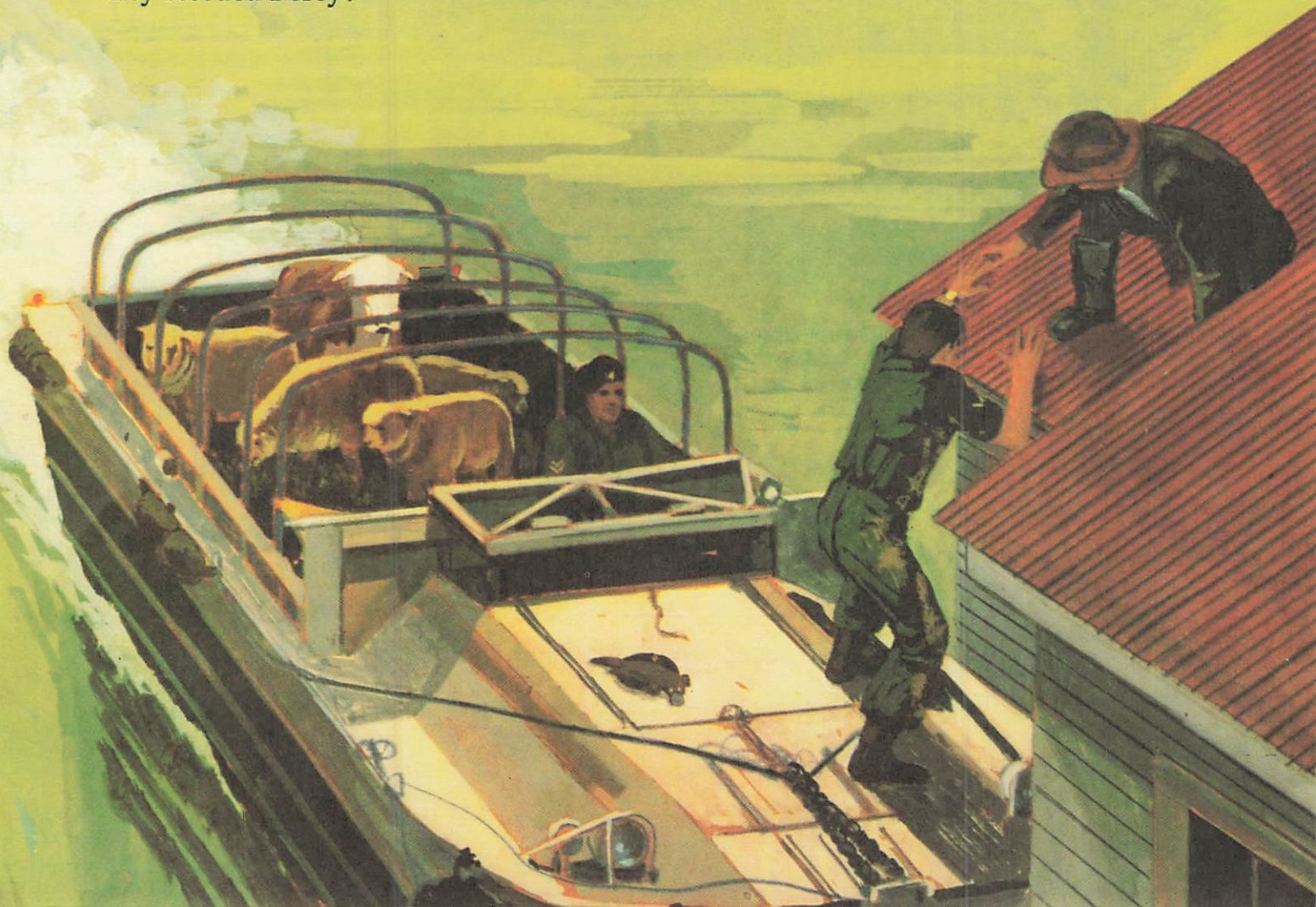
He stroked Percy's back and looked around the fields. Somehow the day seemed brighter now; and suddenly he realised why everything looked different. The rain had stopped.

The soldiers decided to find a safe place for their friend, so they followed the creek, climbing all the time to higher ground.

Blue was driving the Duck. Nobby was standing up, holding Percy, and Percy was grunting and grumbling in the hat. He wanted to be back in his quiet pool; but most of all, he wanted to EAT.

Then, across the flooded paddocks, they saw the red roof of a house with smaller roofs nearby. From the longest roof some arms were waving. A family were stranded by the flood.

They were shouting and cheering, glad to see the Duck churning across the flooded field. Nobby and Blue had never been so welcome in their lives—except perhaps when they rescued Percy!







The family rode to safety in the Duck.

'How did you know which way to come? We were hoping for a plane. We certainly didn't expect a Duck.'

Blue looked at the children. The Major might never understand, but the children would.

'You see,' he began, 'we were rescuing one of the local inhabitants. His name is Percy. He's wriggling over there in Nobby's hat.'

In a quiet place where the trees hung low, their leaves heavy with water from the days of rain, Nobby bent down and released Percy from his cap. He waddled quickly down the bank and slipped with a muffled PLOP! into the stream.

For a moment, the children could see a dark shape, like a piece of bark, floating beneath the surface of the pool, and then it disappeared.

‘Well,’ sighed Nobby, ‘now we go back to work. How do you spell that word?
O—R—N—I—T—H—O—R——?’

He knew he would never learn to spell it, but every time he took a twenty cent coin from his pocket in future, he would remember Percy.





Percy was alone in his pool—he was certain of that—except for a few thousand worms, which would provide him with many future meals. There were even some juicy-looking crayfish who might one day forget he was hunting when they sailed forth from underneath the rocks.

Most important of all, there was no Old Man Platypus living in the pool; if there had been, Percy would never have been allowed to stay.

Now he must make a new home, high up in the bank where floods could never reach. Using his bill as a shovel and his sharp little claws as a rake, Percy began to dig.



One day, months later, a farmer took his children to an Auction, where army vehicles, including Ducks, were being sold. They could use one on their property, for moving stock; but the farmer and his children were looking for a special Duck, and they had found it!

The bidding began. 'One hundred dollars.' 'One-fifty!' 'Two hundred!'

The prices rose higher, higher.

The auctioneer banged down his hammer. 'Going—going—GONE! Sold to the gentleman in the broad-brimmed hat.' The Duck was theirs.

The children fingered the Duck with pride. Scratched roughly in the metal side was a name: H.M.A.S. *Platypus*. Other people were wondering why, but the children knew.



And somewhere in the army, and somewhere in a quiet pool, were two soldiers and a platypus who knew why, and would never forget!

NOTE: The amphibious 'DUCK', which will run in water or on land, is really spelt DUKW which is its name in code, but in the story we have called it a DUCK because that is the way it sounds.





Harry

the Hairy-Nosed Wombat

Written by Jill Morris

Illustrated by Rich Richardson

GOLDEN PRESS



Harry came out of his burrow, nose up, sniffing the air. His whiskers bristled, and the hairs on his pointed nose quivered. He couldn't see very well, but he had a very good sense of smell and his pointed ears could pick up the slightest sound.

It was dark now, and the air above the burrow was quite cool. In the daytime it was very hot up here. The sun beat down on the dry desert land, and hot winds blew across the earth to dry your face and take your breath away.

Down in Harry's burrow it was quite different. Down in their long dark tunnels under the rocks the wombats could escape the heat of the day.

Now that night had come, it was cooler everywhere. Time to go upstairs and live for a while under the stars. Time for wombats to come out of their burrows to feed and play.

Harry's favourite feeding ground was a small patch of grass which grew under a saltbush over towards the sea. Harry had found it himself and had worn a little track to it over the dry ground. He always took the same path.



Sometimes, when he couldn't find any grass, Harry nibbled the leaves of the saltbush but they didn't taste as fresh and cool as blades of grass. Other times he found little puffy balls of fungus poking their heads up through the sandy soil. He liked the taste of those. He could smell them out and dig them up, even before they poked up their heads.

Past Harry's feeding ground, further on over the dry earth, was the sea. It was quite a long walk for a wombat but Harry loved to go there. He liked to watch the waves licking the sand, all along the white beach.





The waves ran in and out and played games with one another, while the moon winked at Harry across the water. The sea murmured and talked to him gently, but he was quite alone.



Harry was a hairy-nosed wombat, just a little different from ordinary wombats. He had a slightly pointed nose and slightly pointed ears and soft silky hair growing across his nose.

His fur was soft and silky too, dark grey in colour, but most of the time he looked so dusty from digging holes in dry ground that you couldn't tell what colour he was.

His front legs finished in sharp claws which were quite wide and black,



like ten small black shovels. They were very handy for digging holes. For best of all in the whole world Harry liked doing two things—digging and chewing.

He could chew through anything—bark, sticks, or the thickest roots. If he came to a root when he was digging under the ground he would simply chew his way through it. His teeth were very white and strong and no matter how much he wore them down, by chewing roots and anything else he could find, they just kept on growing. If Harry didn't keep chewing the teeth went on growing anyway, so he chewed everything in sight to keep his growing teeth worn down and busy.

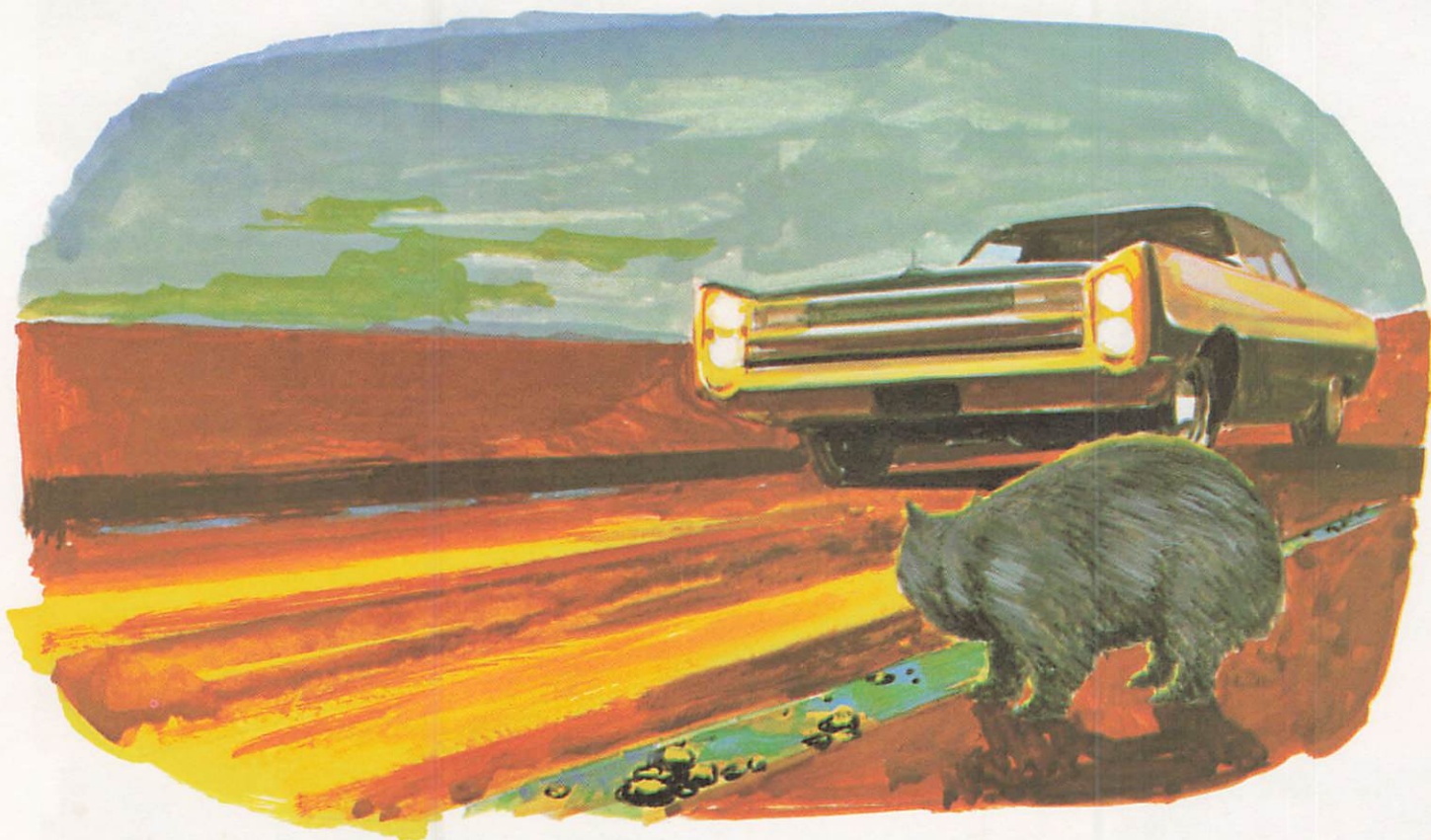


In the end of his burrow, Harry had made himself a cosy nest of dry leaves and twigs, where he could snuggle in for his long daytime sleep.

He liked to be alone. If he happened to bump into another wombat in his long walk down the tunnel from his burrow to the open air, he would snort and grunt as if he were angry, but it was just for show. He was glad to have his friends living nearby, just as long as they all stayed in their own houses.



All the other wombats Harry lived with had hairy noses too, so they didn't know they were different. They all lived together, but each wombat had his own burrow with his own long tunnel leading to his own front door. Then all the tunnels joined up together to make a great maze of tunnels under the ground. The wombats had dug their tunnels under a group of limestone rocks which helped to hide the holes from view.



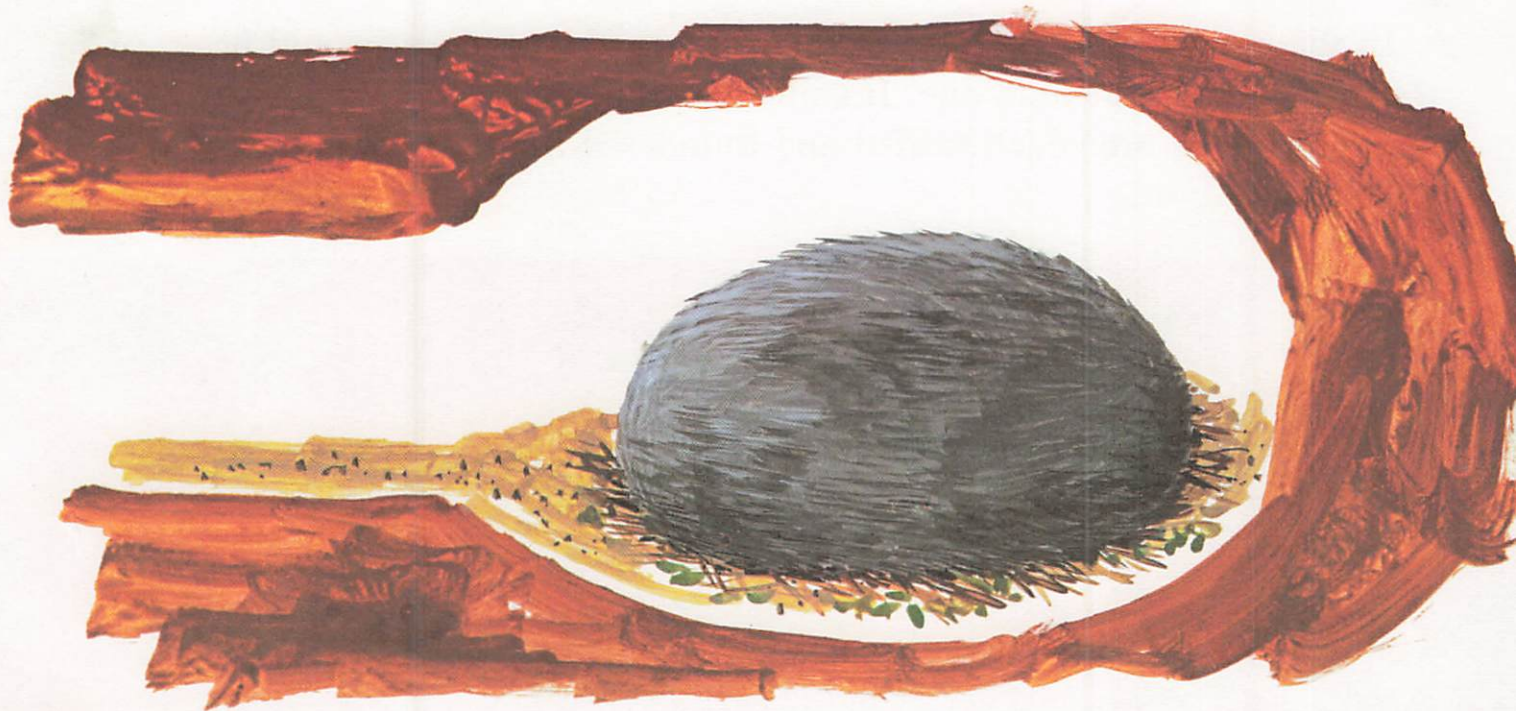
Away from the sea, behind the burrows, was a road. It was not much of a road, not much more than a dusty bush track. Sometimes cars came by, but not often. Sometimes Harry, out on his evening walk, would see a pair of headlights that meant a car was coming and he would lumber carefully back to the safety of his burrow.

Sometimes after rain Harry would go up to drink water from the puddles left by the side of the road. Just once he had been caught there by the lights of a passing car and he had stood very still, half-blinded by the lights and afraid, before hurrying back to his burrow.

The cars made a noise with their engines on the road which warned the wombats of their coming.

In the night, from the safety of their homes, the wombats would hear that other noise, the loud one. It came from further inland—the sound of a long black creature which rattled and thundered through the night.





‘Clickety-clack’ went the wheels, while the engine roared a warning to the night sky, and lights flashed from a hundred tiny windows out onto the black desert. The creature ran on two black rails that stretched on and on as far as you could see. Harry and his friends, out walking at night, never went that way.

Nights were busy times now for Harry, but he still remembered the time when he was a baby wombat and had much more time for play. For a long time he had lived in his mother’s pouch, curled up safe and warm, until the fur had grown all over his body. Then one day his mother had tossed him out, to be a grown-up wombat and walk about on his own four legs.

In those days he had been playful and full of fun, like all young wombats. He was always surprising his mother with sudden runs and bumps just when she least expected it.

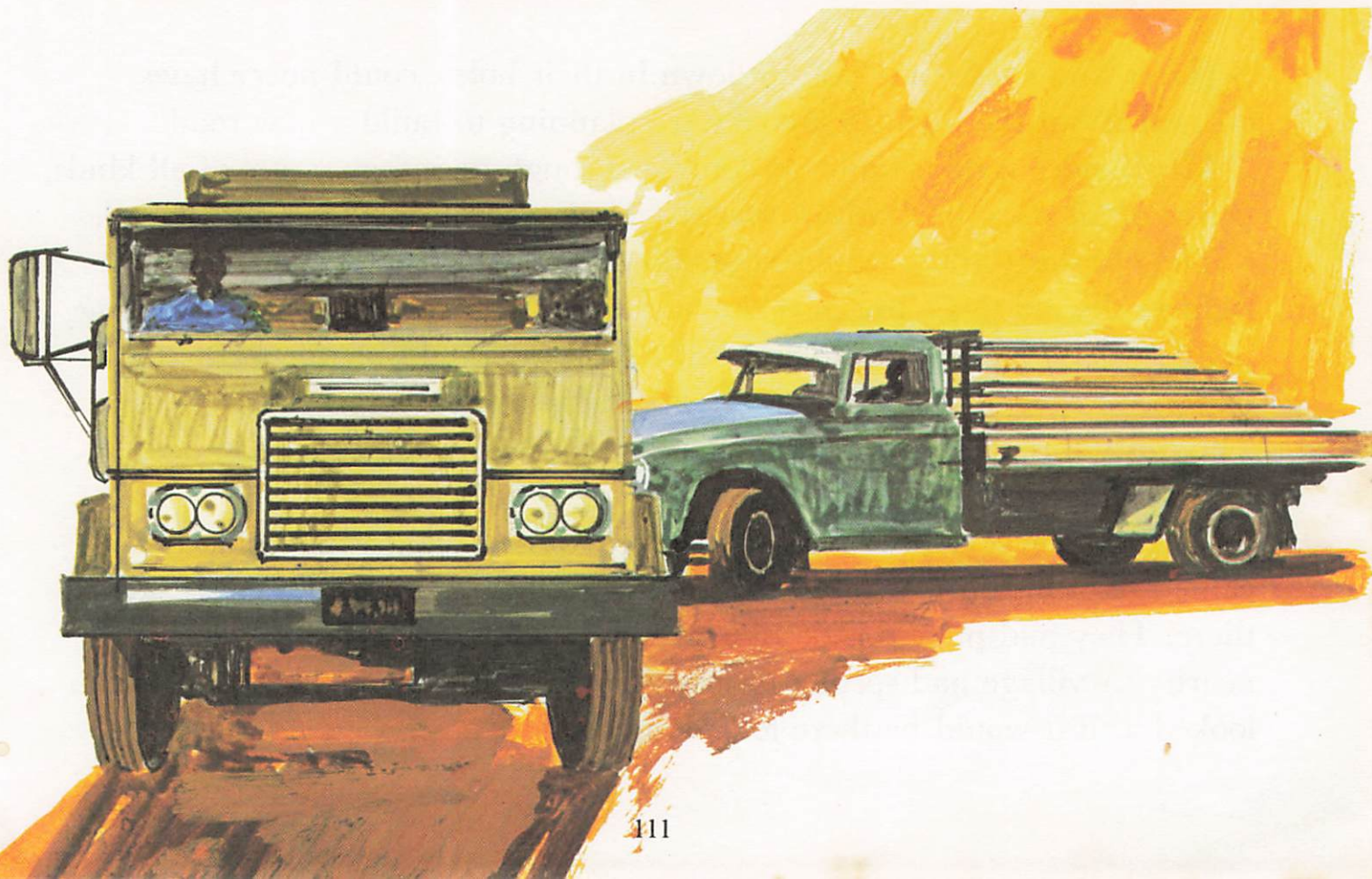
His mother would have been proud of him now. He was three and a half feet long and he weighed eighty pounds. Now he was fully grown. There was no time for play.

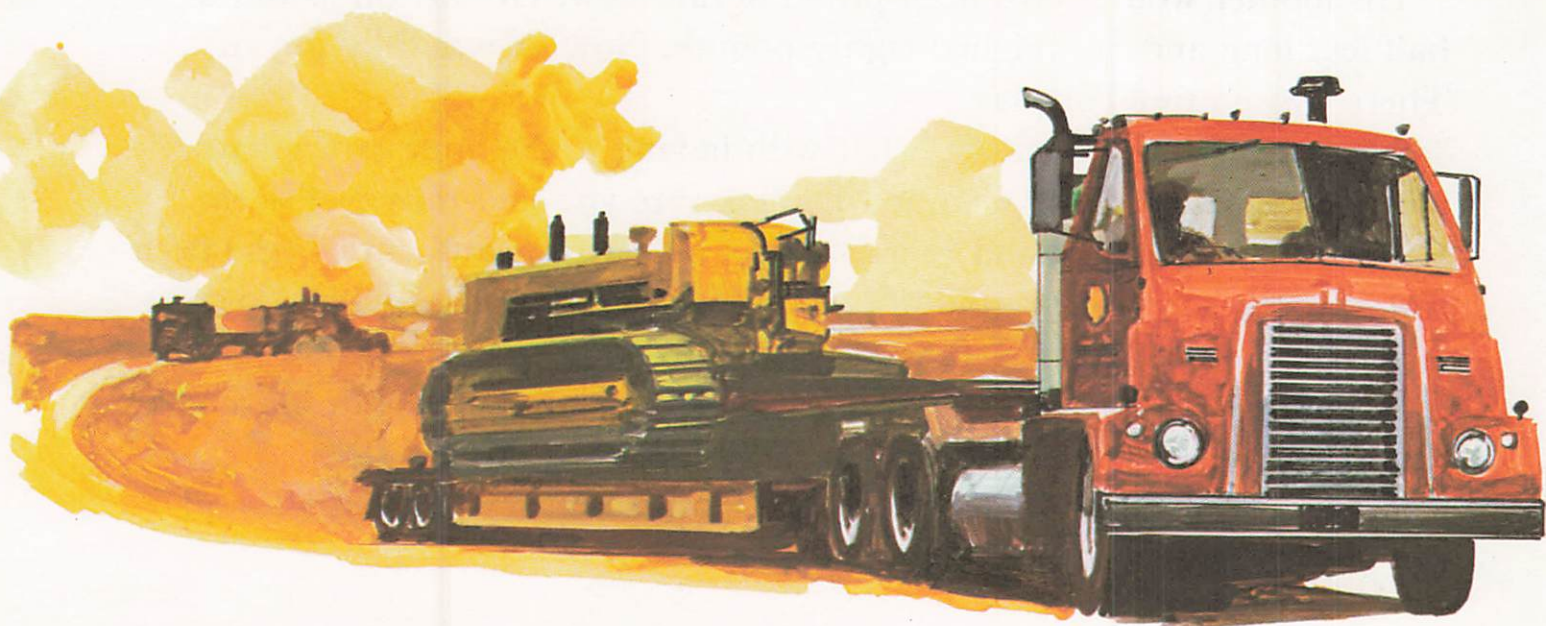
Life was a serious business, what with having to dig your own burrow and keep it safe, finding food and making sure you had plenty of sleep.

Ahh! Harry yawned and rolled over in his burrow, and curled up into a furry bundle so that you couldn't see his feet or his head at all.

Ahh! He yawned again. Life was peaceful here.

Outside in the daylight there was a noise of engines on the dusty road. Two large trucks moved along the road in the sunlight and stopped. Outside on that road where Harry didn't often go, two large trucks and the people inside them had come to stay.





Harry and his friends, asleep down in their holes, could never have guessed it but the men up above were planning to build a new road.

Much more traffic would be coming through here soon—cars of all kinds, trucks of all sizes, busloads of tourists. They would all be using this road.

The old dusty track would never do to carry all that traffic. It was all right in the old days, but now the whole country was growing, expanding in every way. This road, linking east and west, would be one of the most important roads in the country. It would have to be improved.

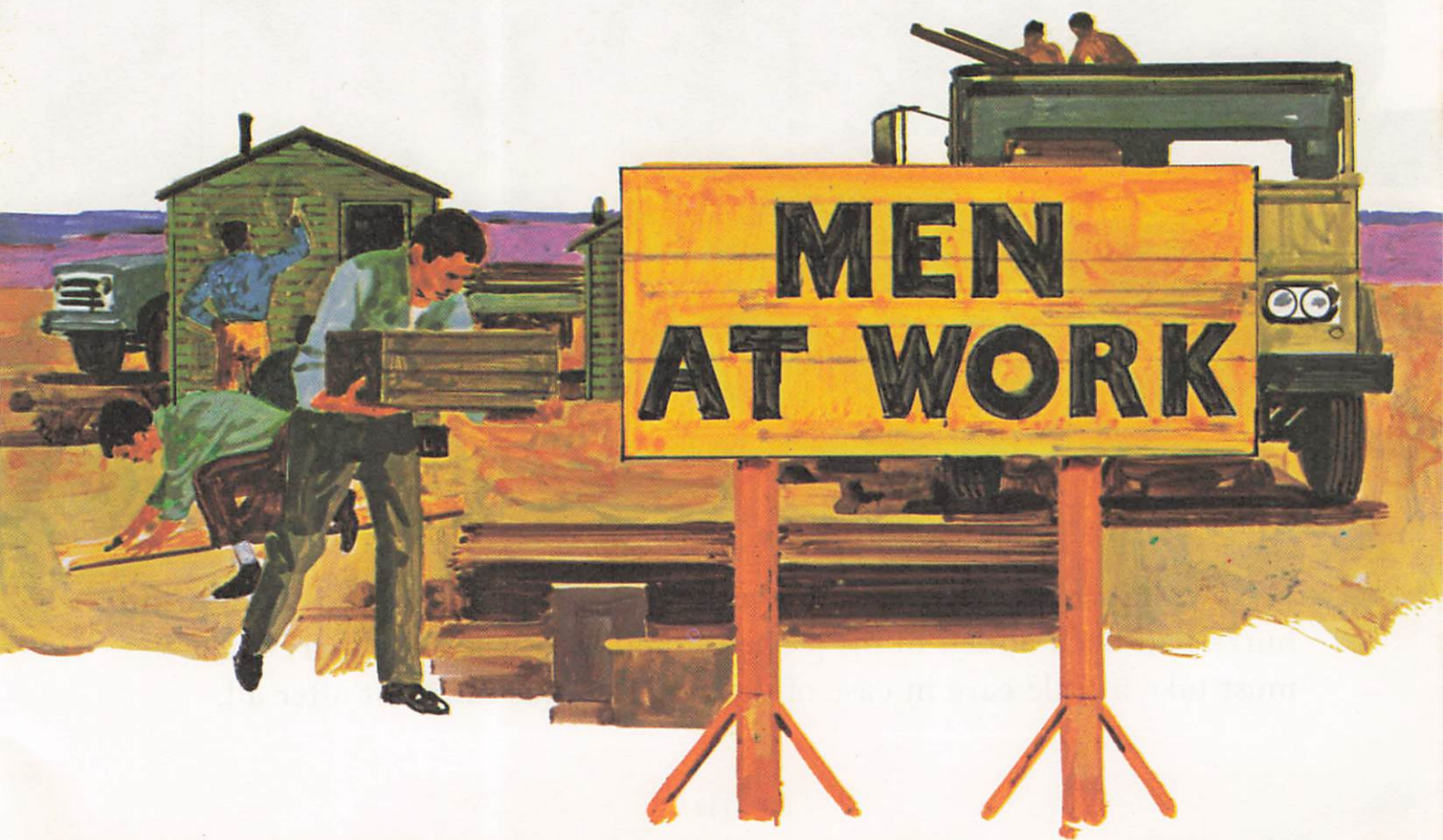
The dusty bush track would be changed into a long black ribbon of bitumen highway.

The men surveyed the road and stayed. When night came and Harry came out of his burrow on his way to his feeding ground, they were still there. They had put up little huts to live in and parked the trucks nearby. A village had sprung up near Harry's quiet home, a village which looked as if it would be there for a long time.

Next day the bulldozers and the graders arrived. Now the noise really started. The bulldozers bit and tore into the earth as Harry's claws never could. They pushed the dry earth along in clouds, making a storm of dust over the land. At night when Harry came out of his hole, the graders and bulldozers were sitting very still but they looked like big black monsters waiting to pounce. They were waiting for daylight, to start their noise again.

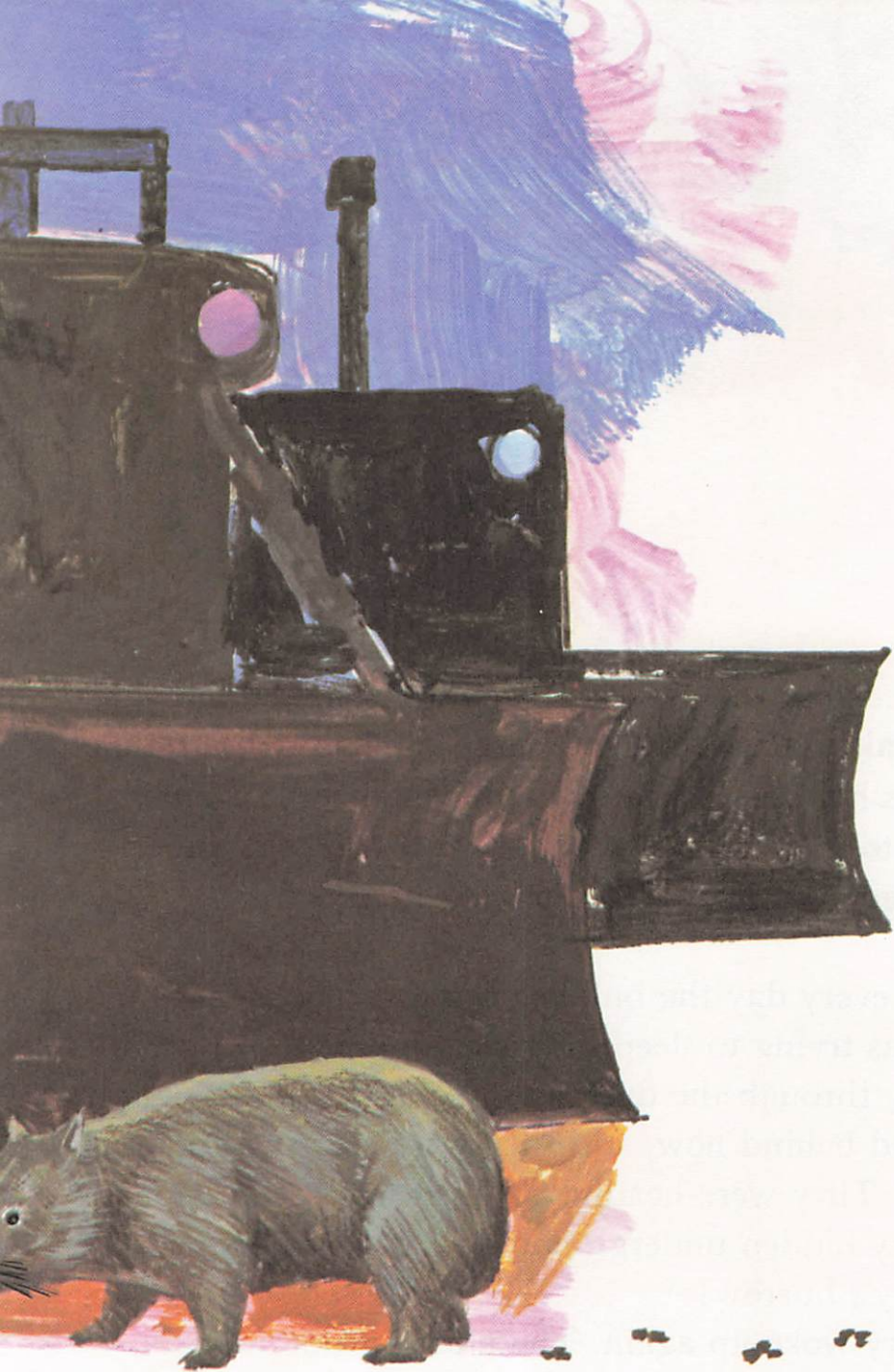
Harry wasn't really afraid. He still followed his own old path to his patch of grass under the saltbush. He went and watched the waves playing on the sand. Here his world still seemed the same. Nothing had really changed.

But there were men standing on the beach—on Harry's own private beach! How dare they! Harry grunted and turned away, and having had enough to eat, lumbered back to his hole.



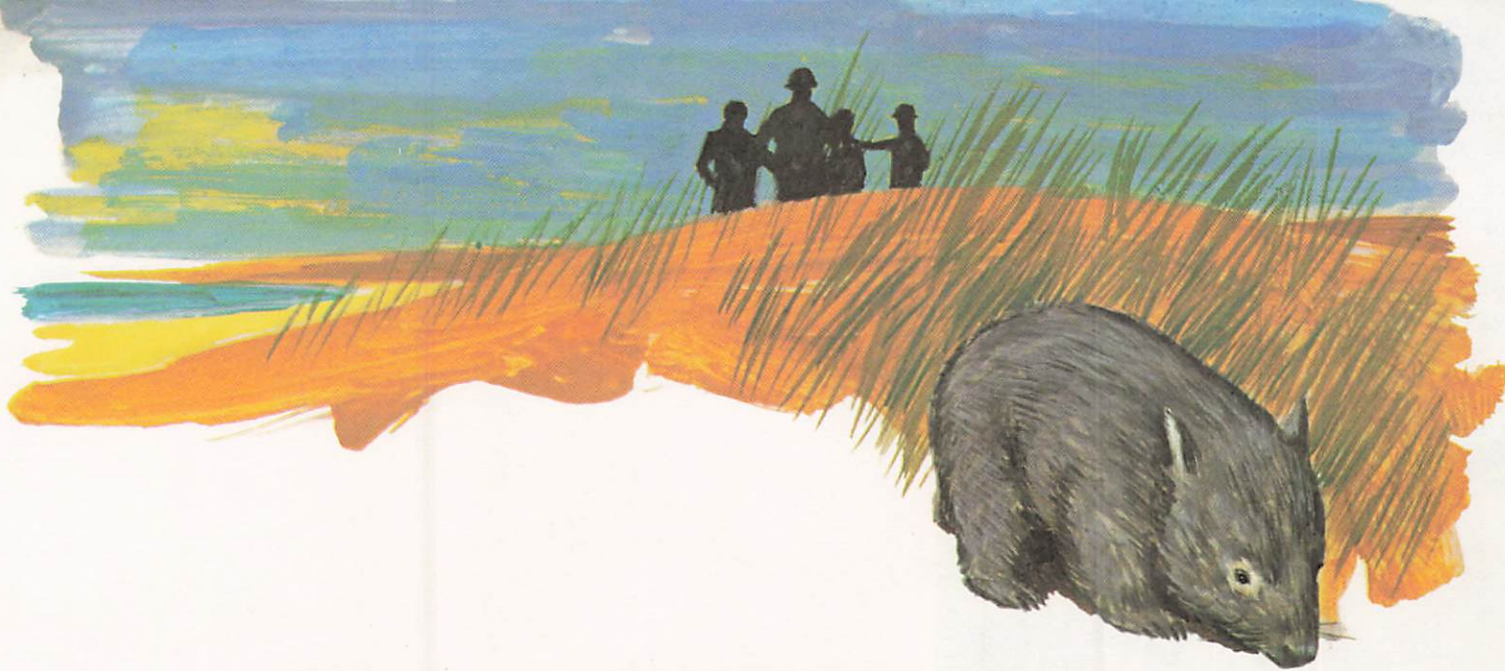


Now, he sensed, there was danger where a wombat walked. Now a little hurry had been added to his peaceful life. As he walked, Harry knew he must take a little care in case of danger. Life was different after all.



His world *had* changed.

Harry didn't know just how different his life could be, or how much his little world was about to change.



The surveyors had decided that the new road would not follow the old road exactly. They would take out some of the bumps and straighten some of the curves. The surveyors had made a map for the engineers and the engineers had given orders to the foreman. The foreman had told the bulldozer drivers where to go and they were following their orders, pushing on.

To Harry it seemed that every day the bulldozers made more noise. During the day when he was trying to sleep the machines moved closer and closer, nosing their way through the dust.

They had left the old road behind now, and they were clearing a new path across the dry ground. They were heading straight for the limestone rocks where the wombats lay hidden underground. They were heading straight for the end of Harry's burrow!

Down in his burrow Harry woke up again. The noise outside was deafening. He turned over and hid his head between his paws, but the noise was still there. It would not go away.

It was worse than just a noise. It roared down through the earth. It was like a monster who had come to live in the burrow with him.





The whole earth was vibrating with the noise. The ground shook and shivered. Little pieces of the roof of Harry's burrow fell down on his head. He dug down deeper into the floor of his house and put his head down as low as he could. He closed his eyes and tried to pretend that the noise had gone away. But it was still there.

Up above the bulldozer drivers had had a good day. They drove on, pushing the earth aside in clouds, and leaving it in piles by the side of the road. Then they moved back to push some more.

If they worked hard today they could finish this stretch of the road early and cool off in the sea.

Late in the afternoon, they moved on to the last section and pushed over the last rocks. Ah! The last big rock was pushed aside and crushed into a hole. Work was over for the day. The drivers backed their machines away,

very satisfied with the day's work. They climbed down, wiped their faces and went for a swim.

The last rock, a large one, lay still where it had been pushed—right in the entrance to Harry's burrow.

For a while Harry didn't know what had happened. When the rock fell he was dozing in the cosy end of his burrow. At first, when he woke up, he couldn't understand why everything seemed different. Then he knew. The noise had stopped! Silence! Peace at last!

He rolled over to snatch a little more sleep. It was time to get up and he did feel quite hungry, but lately his sleep had been interrupted so much he thought he'd better catch up on some sleep while he could. So, as people always do when they've been kept awake for half the night, Harry slept in.





At last he moved, sleepily. It had been a hard night with all that noise going on. The other wombats would surely be out and about by now. Perhaps they would even be eating at his feeding ground! That thought was enough to wake him up.

Harry moved sleepily along the tunnel. He had made it wide and high, but today it was in a terrible mess. Some soil had fallen down from the roof and several small stones were in his way. Harry pushed them aside with his sharp little claws. They were easily moved. It would take larger rocks than those to stop him!

Then he stopped. A rock was blocking his path. A large rock. Right where the entrance to the burrow should be there was a blank wall.

Harry grunted. At first he was simply surprised. He couldn't believe the



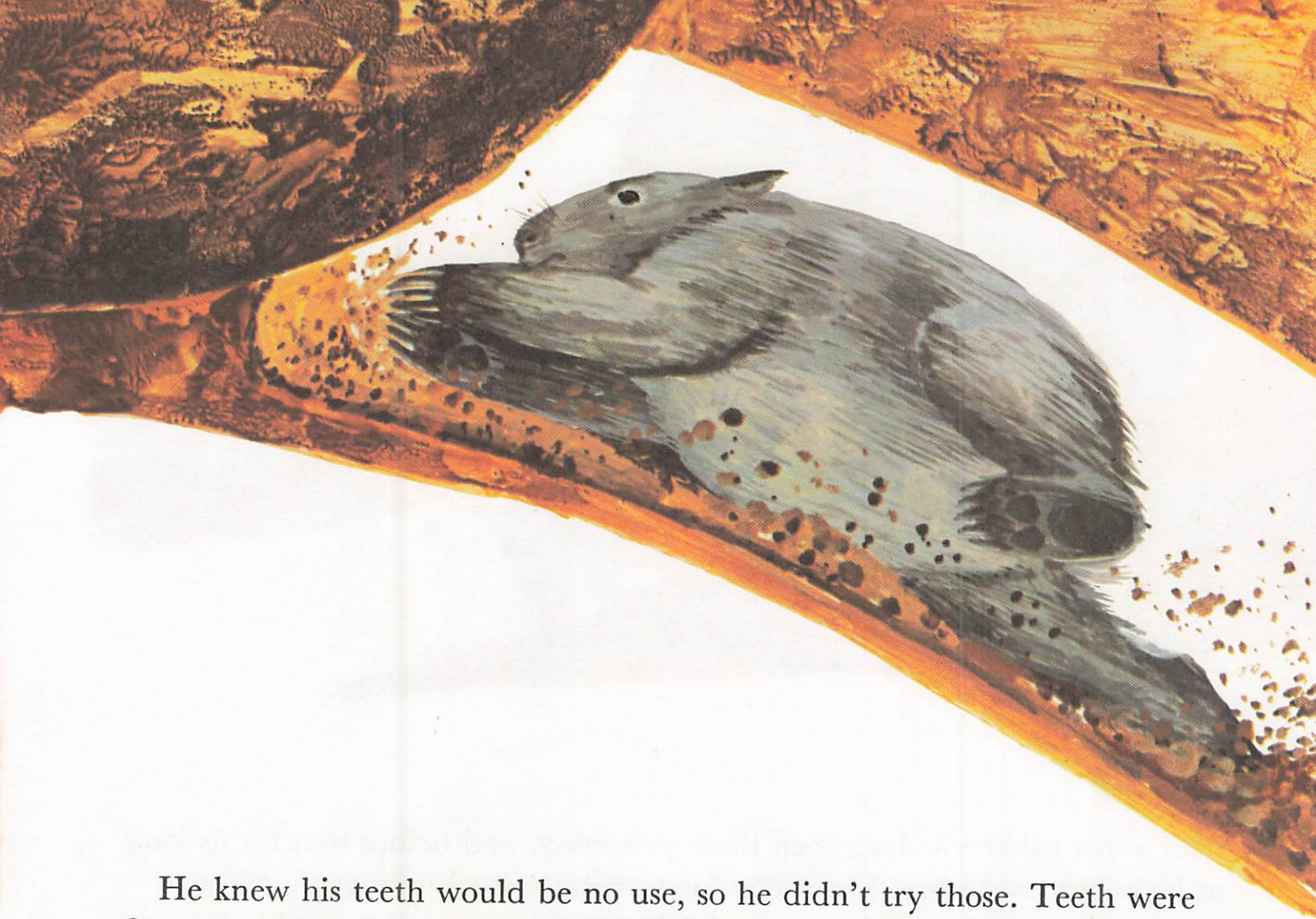
door wasn't there. It had been there yesterday, and before that for as long as he could remember. Very soon his surprise turned to anger.

'Humph!' he grunted. A rock, eh? Well, no rock would stop him.

Any other animal might have gone back and taken another way out, but not a wombat, even a hairy-nosed wombat. Not Harry.

Why should he go back? He always took this path to his feeding ground so why should he go any other way tonight? Up there the blades of juicy grass were calling and Harry was on his way. It was time for wombats to be up, and he was up. It was time for wombats to come out and feed, so feed he would.

'Humph!' No rock, however big, would stop him. Harry prepared to dig his way round it.



He knew his teeth would be no use, so he didn't try those. Teeth were for roots and sharp claws were for rocks. So, with his ten small black shovels working Harry started digging.

He lay on his side and tore at the soil around the rock with his front claws. Then he pushed the soil right through under his body with his front legs and let his back legs kick it back out of the way.

So he went on digging and tearing at the earth, a little like a bulldozer himself, until a chink of light began to show beside the rock. He worked on until the chink widened to a window and the window widened to a door. Then with a snort he clambered through and stood outside in the clear night air, with the moon winking down on him from above.

Dusty all over but pleased with himself, he shook his fur and sniffed. Up here the ground had been changed. The dust had been pushed around and piled up in different places.

But the juicy blades of grass were waiting, and Harry was ready to sample them. He waddled off in the direction of the sandhills, following his own old path.

The new road made by the bulldozers was a wide, dusty path, with a long pile of soil on either side. Harry waddled across the new road and pushed through the pile of soil.

He grunted. Why should rocks and soil be lying everywhere he wanted to go?

With his head pointing firmly in the direction he was going, he followed his path to his feeding ground, the sandhills and the sea. On the dusty surface of the new road he left a trail—wombat tracks, clearly marked.

That night when he had finished feeding, Harry went back to his burrow, back through the pile of soil, back across the new road and popped back into his tunnel through his new front door which was now a big gaping hole.



All this time the other wombats were having no trouble at all. Their burrows all lay behind Harry's. His was the only burrow in the path of the new road.

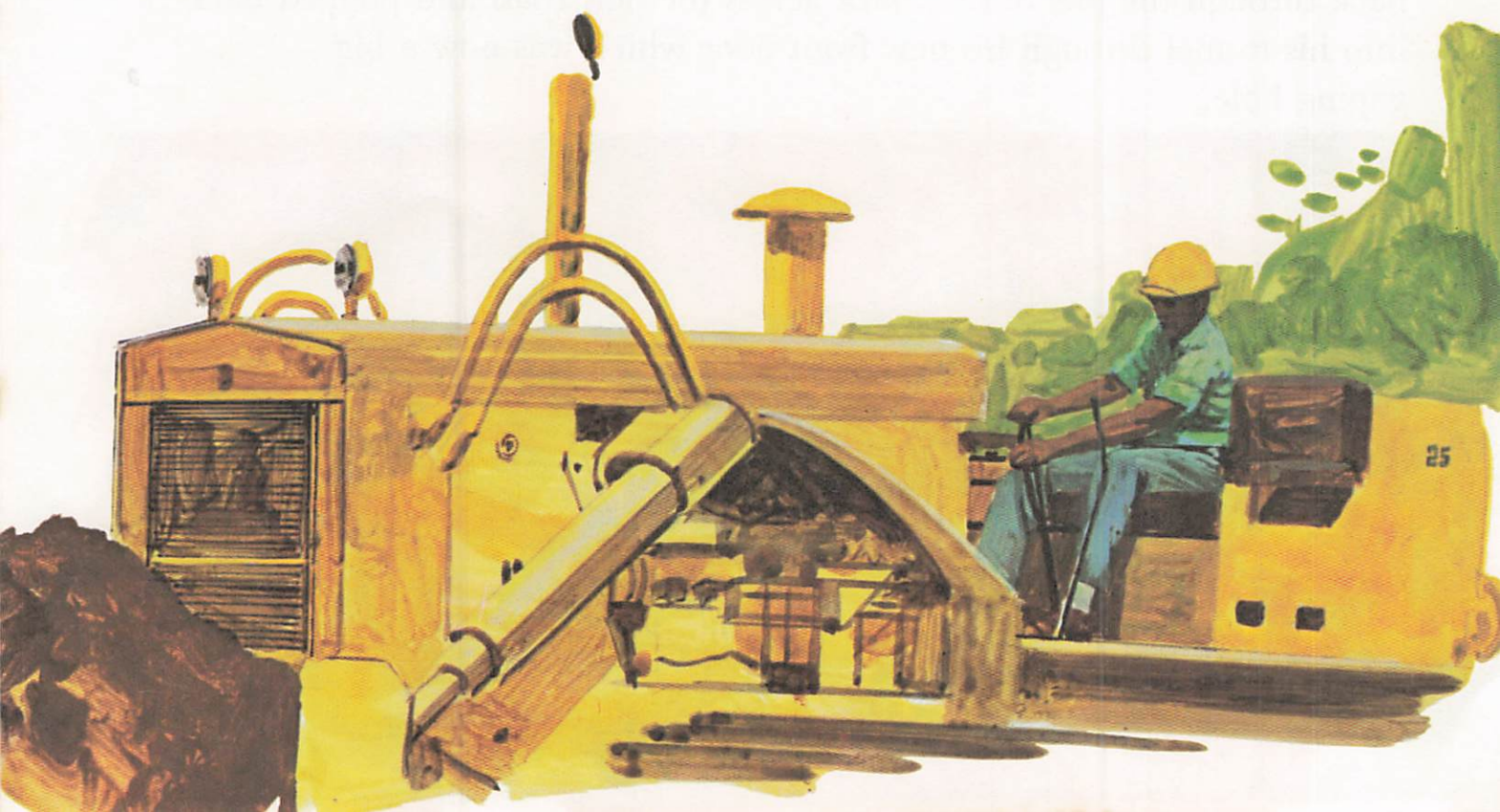
He was the only wombat who went back to sleep that night muttering and grumbling about the monster who had come to live in his tunnel and put rocks inside his front door.

Harry would have to fight this battle alone.

The burrow looked cosy and inviting, and after his long night of digging, Harry curled up gratefully and went to sleep.

Not for long. By this time, it was so close to daylight outside that the men were preparing to start work.

It was so hot here working out in the sun all day that the drivers had decided to start work very early in the morning while the air was still cool, have a long rest in the middle of the day when the sun was overhead and





then work again until quite late in the evening when a cool breeze blew off the sea. It seemed a good idea and the foreman didn't mind. So today the men were out very early, with engines warming up. The noise was beginning again.



But this morning the men saw something that made them stop work almost as soon as they had started. There, across the freshly graded road were animal tracks. What sort of animal had made them the men couldn't tell, but they were freshly made. The animal had walked across here in the night.

Worst of all, on the flattened surface of the road there was a hole, a huge gaping hole with soil crumbling down from its sides. A hole which must have been dug by an animal a little like a bulldozer himself.

The men shrugged their shoulders and started up their engines. Arhh! Bump! The bulldozers groaned, filling up the hole with a new load of soil. To make sure, they knocked more stones into the hole and crunched them down until the road was flat and new once more.

All day they worked, while down below Harry shuddered in his bed. No sleep again! The monster was back in the end of his tunnel. The earth shook and stones rained down on him from above. Curled up in a tight ball, he tried to take no notice.

At last it was night and the noise had stopped. Outside, the new road had grown longer. Wide and straight, it snaked off one way to the east, the other way to the west. The men were very proud of it. Harry couldn't know that his piece of road was nearly finished. Nor did he care. If he had anything to do with it, the road would never be done.

All he knew was that once again a large rock, many smaller rocks and a load of soil, had been dumped inside his front door and he would have to dig them out again.





Harry lay on his side and began to dig. It was harder this time, because the machines had packed the stones down firmly but Harry was not the wombat to give in easily.

He grunted and he groaned, he shovelled and he pushed, he tore and dug into the earth with his claws until once again the doorway was clear. Once more he stood under the evening sky shaking dust from his fur, then grunted his way off to his feeding ground. Once more there were wombat tracks across the new road. Once more there was a great gaping hole.

By the time Harry came back to his burrow that night, he had almost forgotten the silly battle he was fighting with the people up above.

However the people hadn't forgotten. They could work very fast, and they did. First thing in the morning, when the men started work and saw the hole was back again, back came a bulldozer to fill it in.

The foreman was getting cross now. He was almost as cross as Harry.

If his men had to spend every day fixing the same piece of road they'd never be finished. They didn't want to live here in the little huts forever. They wanted to go home. Yet every day they bulldozed the road and every night Harry dug it up again.

The men were growing curious. What sort of an animal could be making the hole every night? They looked down into the tunnel to see where it led, but it was too far and too dark to see to the end and it wasn't large enough for a man to wriggle through.

The only man who tried it was stuck upside down for half an hour. At last they dug him out, covered in dust, and he had to wash it all off in the sea.

Then the men noticed another hole beside a limestone rock, and one beside a clump of saltbush, and one on the other side of a little hill.

'They're everywhere,' they said. 'They must all connect together and meet underground.'



‘Wombats,’ said the foreman. ‘We’re doing battle with wombats.’

‘One wombat,’ said a bulldozer driver, whose name was Fred. ‘There’s only one hole here in our new road, and it must be the same wombat who’s digging it every night.’

If the men thought Harry would give in, they didn’t know anything about wombats. For wombats are very determined creatures. Even hairy-nosed wombats. Harry would have gone on forever digging that hole. That was his home and that was where he meant to stay.

That day, up on the road, the two enemies who were fighting the battle met each other for the first time.

Harry felt cool downstairs in his burrow and it seemed very quiet outside. He decided to go up for a while and catch some sun. It was quite an unusual thing for Harry to do, but this felt like a special day so he lumbered along the tunnel towards his front door. Then he





discovered that it *was* a special day, because for once the door was open. There was nothing blocking his way.

Harry popped his head out into the fresh air and there were the workmen, standing in a group looking at him.

‘A wombat,’ said the foreman, feeling pleased with himself. ‘Told you so.’

‘It’s not an ordinary wombat,’ said Fred. ‘See his hairy nose?’

‘He looks a bit like a pig.’

‘A guinea-pig.’

‘Or a badger.’

‘Or a bear,’ said some of the other men who had never seen a wombat before.

The bulldozer driver called Fred took off his hat and looked at Harry. ‘So you’re the fellow who’s been causing all the trouble.’

Harry was tired of being stared at. The men had spoiled his fun again. No sunbaking today. He lifted his front leg and reaching along as far as he could, scratched his back. Then he humphed back into his burrow.

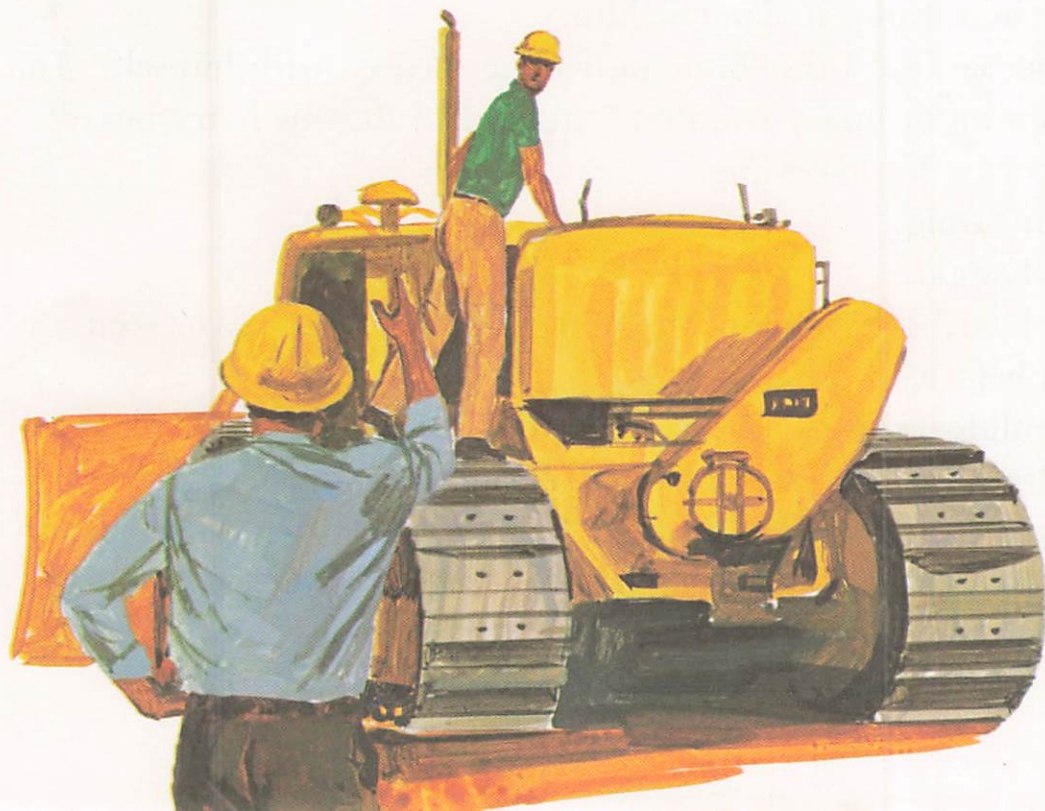
'Better fill in the hole again, Fred,' said the foreman with a look that said, 'Back to work, everyone!'

'Seems a shame,' said Fred, 'when it's his home. He's a hairy-nosed wombat you know, not a plain-nosed one.'

'I don't care if he's got two heads,' said the foreman. 'Better fill in the hole.'

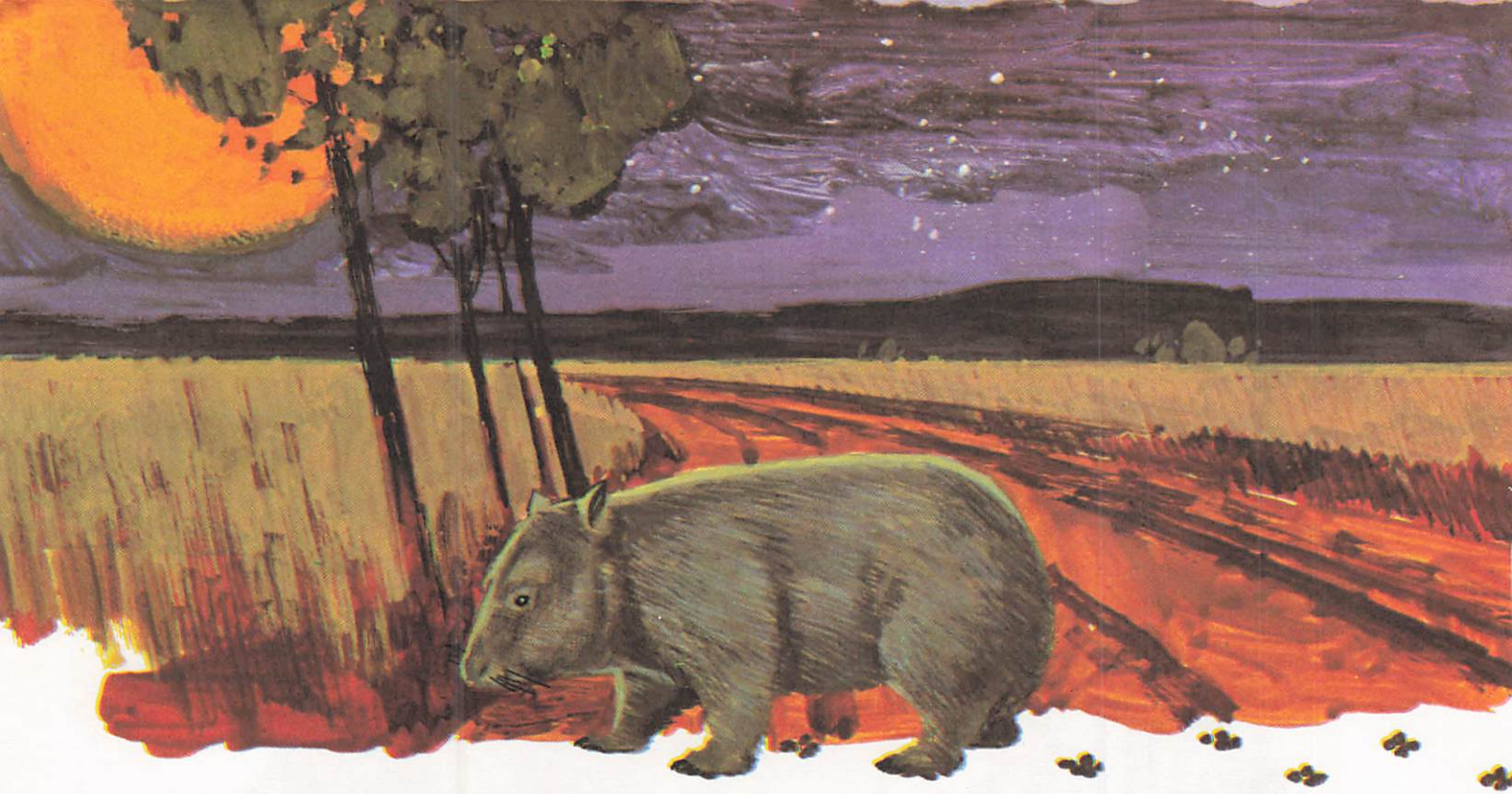
Fred, who knew that the foreman gave the orders and the driver carried them out, said 'Yes, Sir,' and did as he was told.

From down below Harry heard the engines starting up. By now he knew what it meant but he didn't care. His claws could go on digging forever. He was willing to keep on digging his way out as long as the men went on shutting him in.



When night came and he found his door blocked up once more, he kicked the stones and soil high in the air with glee and popped out into the night air. But someone was standing there watching him, someone with a light on the end of a long pole. It was Fred.





‘Hullo there, old chap. At it again?’ said Fred in a friendly way.

‘Humph!’ said Harry, setting off to his patch to have breakfast.

‘It’s all right, old fellow. I won’t hurt you. I have an idea. I think it’s time you and I declared a truce. No, you wouldn’t know what that is, but when two parties are having a battle, and no-one will give in, the only thing to do is to declare a truce. It means we stop fighting for a while, and see if we can do anything about it.’

But Harry didn’t hear Fred’s explanation. He had gone waddling off to the sandhills. He didn’t have time to stand about and chat. It was time for his next meal.

Next day, Harry had his best sleep in weeks. The machines were working again, but they seemed far away. Down in his burrow, all was quiet and peaceful.

Over in the foreman's hut, the men were having an argument. Fred had asked the foreman to write a letter to the people who planned the roads, back east in the capital city, asking if something couldn't be done. At last, the foreman agreed to send the letter. There was no harm in asking, he supposed.

While the men were waiting for a reply, Harry had plenty of sleep. Then back came a letter. It was short but its message was clear. Of course the road must go where it was planned. Surely the men out there building the road would not be told what to do by a wombat?



Poor Fred! And poor Harry! The truce was over. Fred spent a busy day fixing the road again and Harry spent a busy night digging another hole.

Then Fred persuaded the foreman to send another letter and back came another letter, angrier than before.

‘What is going on out there?’ the letter asked.

‘As soon as possible,’ it said, ‘we will come out there and see for ourselves!’

Soon more people arrived at Harry’s home in that dry part of the land, close to the sea but far away from big cities where roads are planned.

Big black cars arrived and men in dark grey suits got out of them. The workmen called them ‘V.I.P.s’, which was short for ‘Very Important



People'. They all walked up and down near Harry's home while Fred explained and down below, Harry slept.

The Very Important People were engineers. They knew all about making tunnels but they were used to planning overpasses and under-passes, expressways and underground railways. They weren't used to looking into wombat burrows.

However they found it all very interesting and they looked into all the wombat burrows they could find and worked out how they all connected up together under the ground.

Very soon, their dark grey suits were dusty as wombats' coats, but they didn't mind at all.

Suddenly it seemed more important to look at this beautiful spot where the wombats lived than to think about a dusty old road.





They walked across the dry earth to the sandhills and there they found little patches of grass. They found puffy balls of fungus that wombats like to eat. They'd never noticed those before. They felt the dried-out leaves of the saltbush and wondered how it went on growing here right through the driest weather.

They stood up on the sandhills and watched the waves playing games with one another, all along the white beach. One lucky man looked far out to sea and saw a whale spouting. Far off, he could see the tall spout of water shooting high above the waves. The others shaded their faces with their hands and strained their eyes and wished they could see it too.

Then they all walked back to look again at Harry's burrow and the new road.

'It's very clever,' said one, 'the way these wombats build their tunnels underground, all joining up together.'

‘Like that subway you’re building in Sydney,’ said one of the others.

‘You know,’ said the first man, ‘these wombats would make fine engineers.’

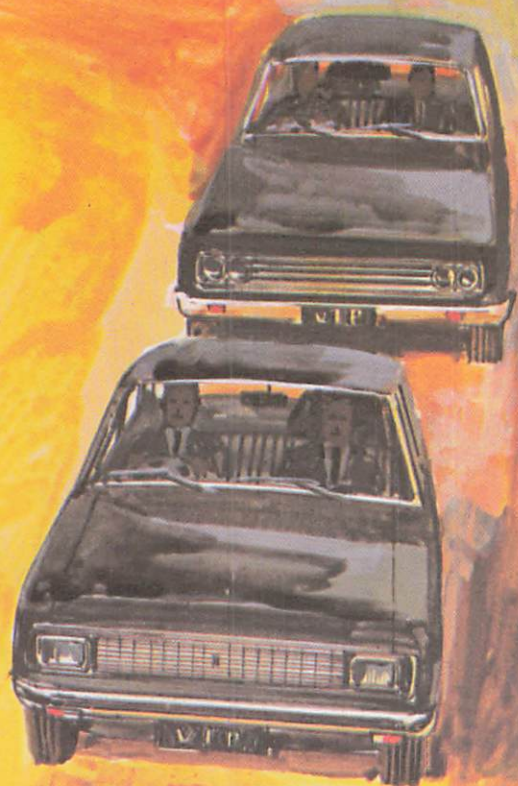
There, standing near Harry’s burrow, they made their decision. ‘There’s no reason why the new road can’t follow the old one. There’ll be a long curve and that will make the road a little longer, but what does it matter in all these miles?’



The V.I.P.s climbed into their cars and drove away. Before long the bulldozers and graders, the huts and the men, the foreman and even Fred would be going too. As soon as they'd finished the road, and they must do it quickly. Enough time had been wasted already.

In a short time there was a long black ribbon of bitumen highway stretching away in both directions, linking east and west.

Down in his burrow, Harry slept in peace. The new highway was far enough away. It would never worry him. He had fought his battle and earned a rest, but he still felt that this home was worth fighting for.







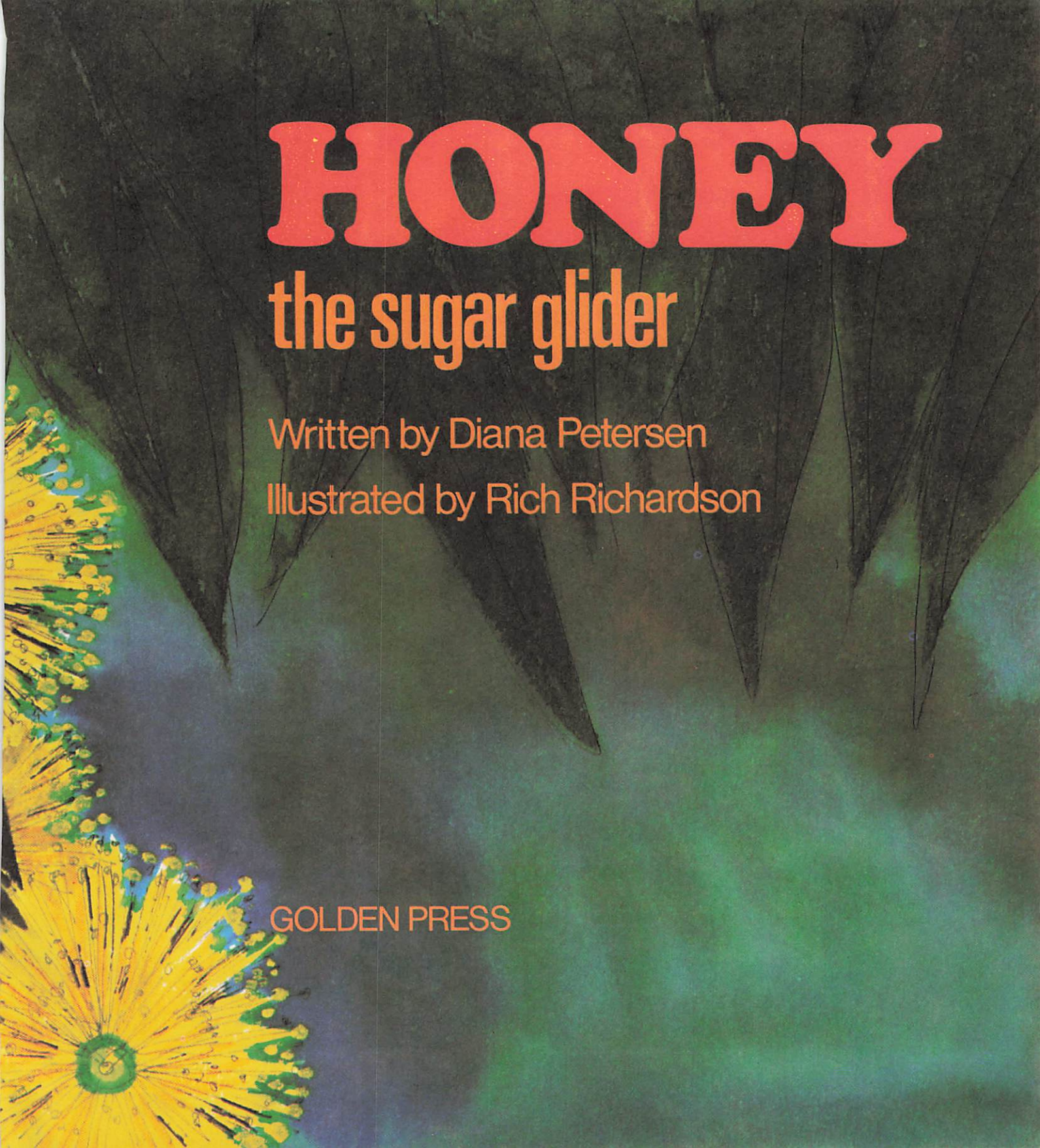
It was the place he liked best. There were tufts of grass only a wombat-walk away, and puffy balls of fungus, if you knew where to look and had sharp claws for digging. And roots underground, if you had sharp teeth for chewing. And sandhills, with a long white beach, if you liked going for walks at night.



A dry land, yes, but the perfect place to live if you happened to be a hairy-nosed wombat.

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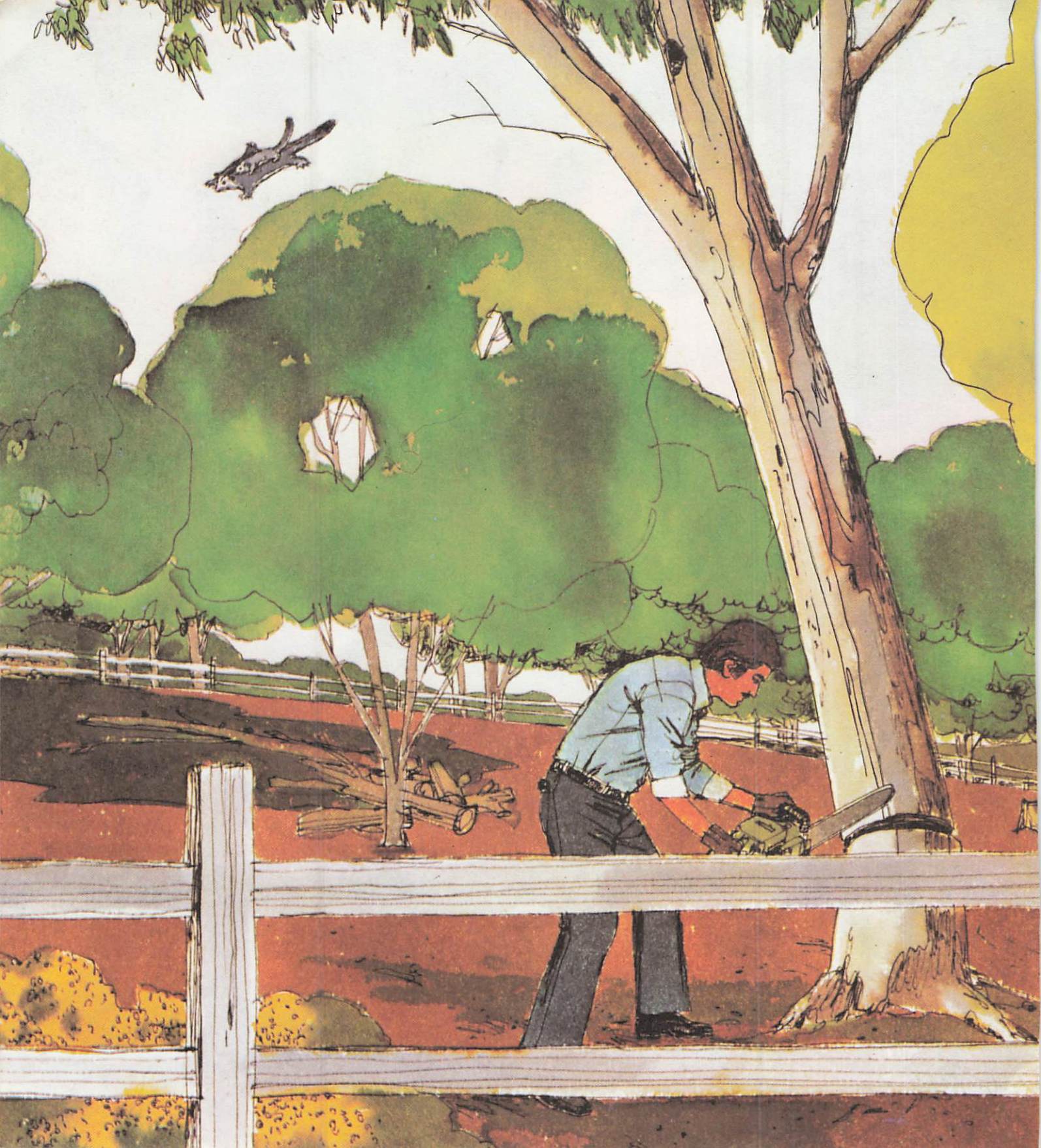
HONEY

the sugar glider

Written by Diana Petersen

Illustrated by Rich Richardson

GOLDEN PRESS



From a safe distance Penny and Jim watched their father clearing the bottom paddock, while the whine of the chain saw and the tearing crash of falling trees echoed through the gully.

'What's that?' cried Penny. She was pointing to a tiny creature gliding from the top of a falling gum. A web of skin between its arms and feet stretched out like a parachute, and its tail moved up and down.

'It's a sugar glider!' shouted Jim. 'And look! It has a baby on its back!'



The sugar glider landed near the base of another tree. Up to the top of it she raced, spiralling round and round the trunk, until in a few seconds she had disappeared in the thick branches.

‘Was there only the one baby on her back?’ called Dad. ‘That’s strange—they usually have two. Let’s see if we can find her nest. It must have been somewhere in this tree which came down; probably a hole in a hollow branch.’



‘Here’s the nest!’ called Jim. ‘And the other baby’s still in it!’

Penny peered over his shoulder. The nest was lined with shredded bark and leaves, and curled up in a tight little ball was Honey—looking very startled.

‘Here, let’s have a look at you,’ said Dad, slipping his hand under the tiny possum. Honey started and gave a little hiss, but she was too bewildered to try and run away.





'This is a very young one,' said Dad. 'I don't suppose she's been out of her mother's pouch for more than a couple of weeks.'

'What'll happen to her?' asked Jim, stroking Honey's little grey head with his finger.

'If felling the tree hadn't frightened her mother right away she would have stayed in the nest for another few weeks, but I'm afraid she'll die if we leave her here on her own,' Dad said, looking down at the frightened little glider.





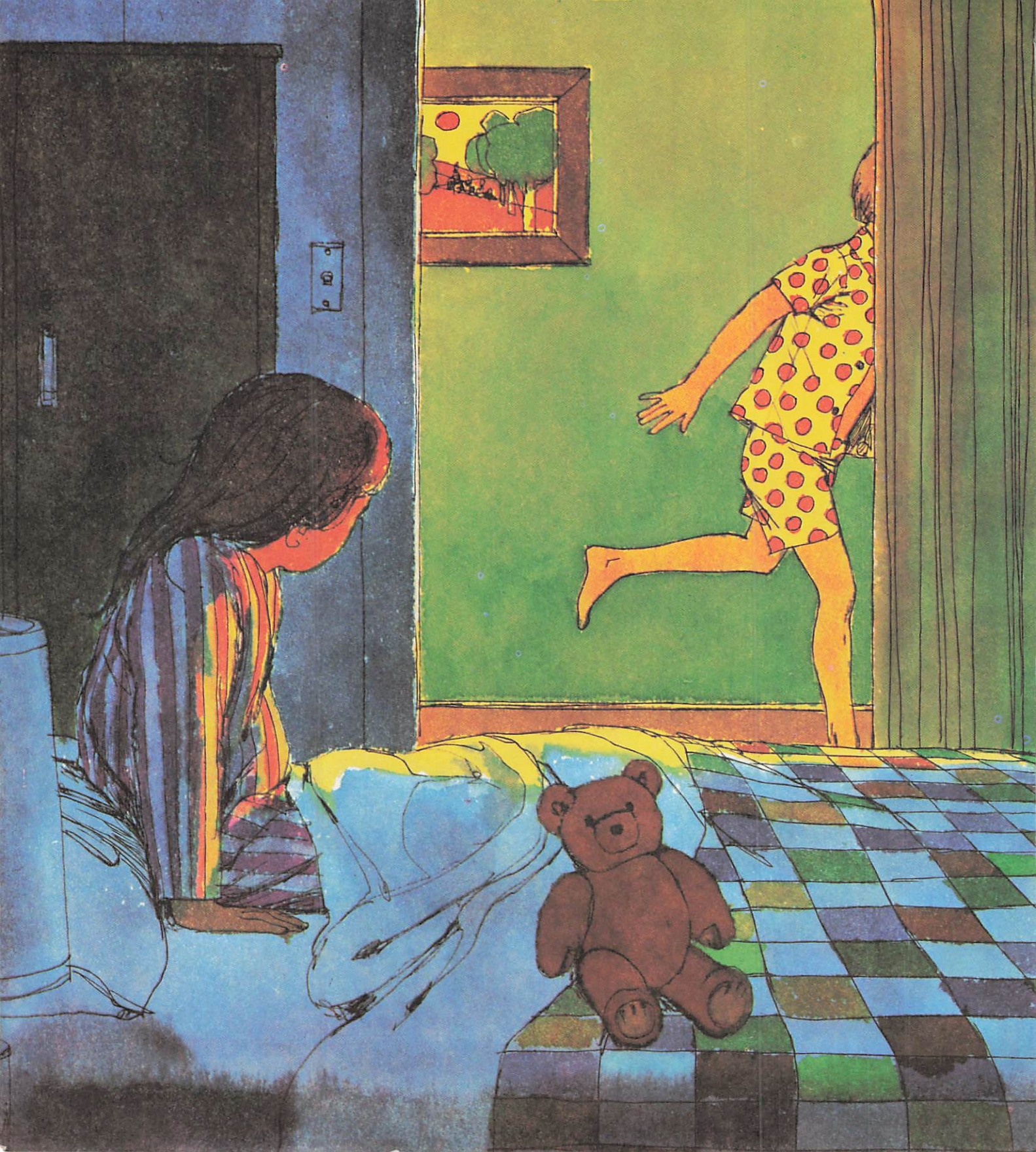
‘Couldn’t we look after her?’ begged Penny.

‘We could try,’ said Dad. ‘They normally eat insects and gum blossoms, but as this one isn’t much more than a baby we’ll see if she’ll have some warm milk to start with.’

At home Honey soon ate all the cake Mum crumbled in warm milk for her, then curled her thick bushy tail round herself and went to sleep.





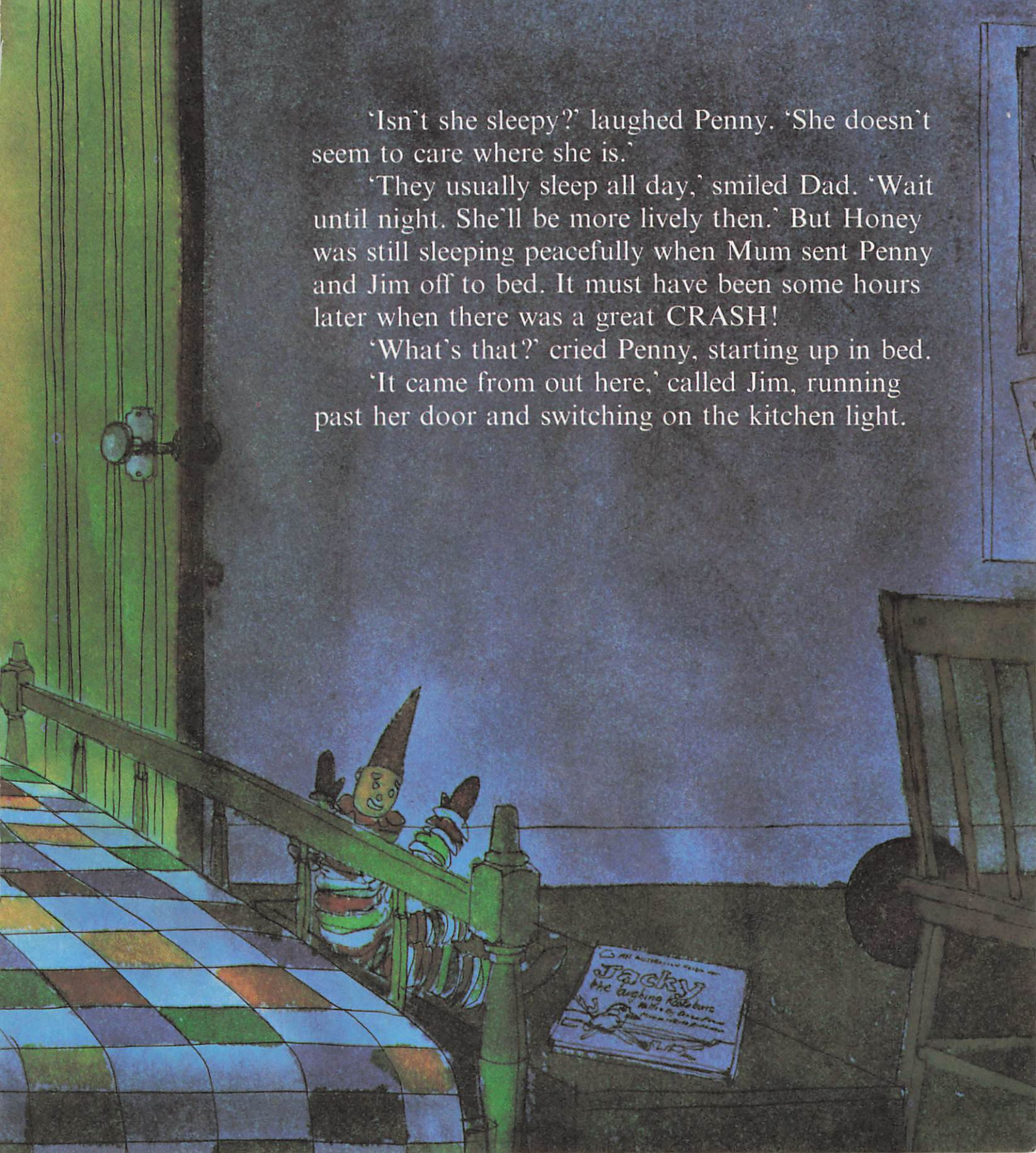


'Isn't she sleepy?' laughed Penny. 'She doesn't seem to care where she is.'

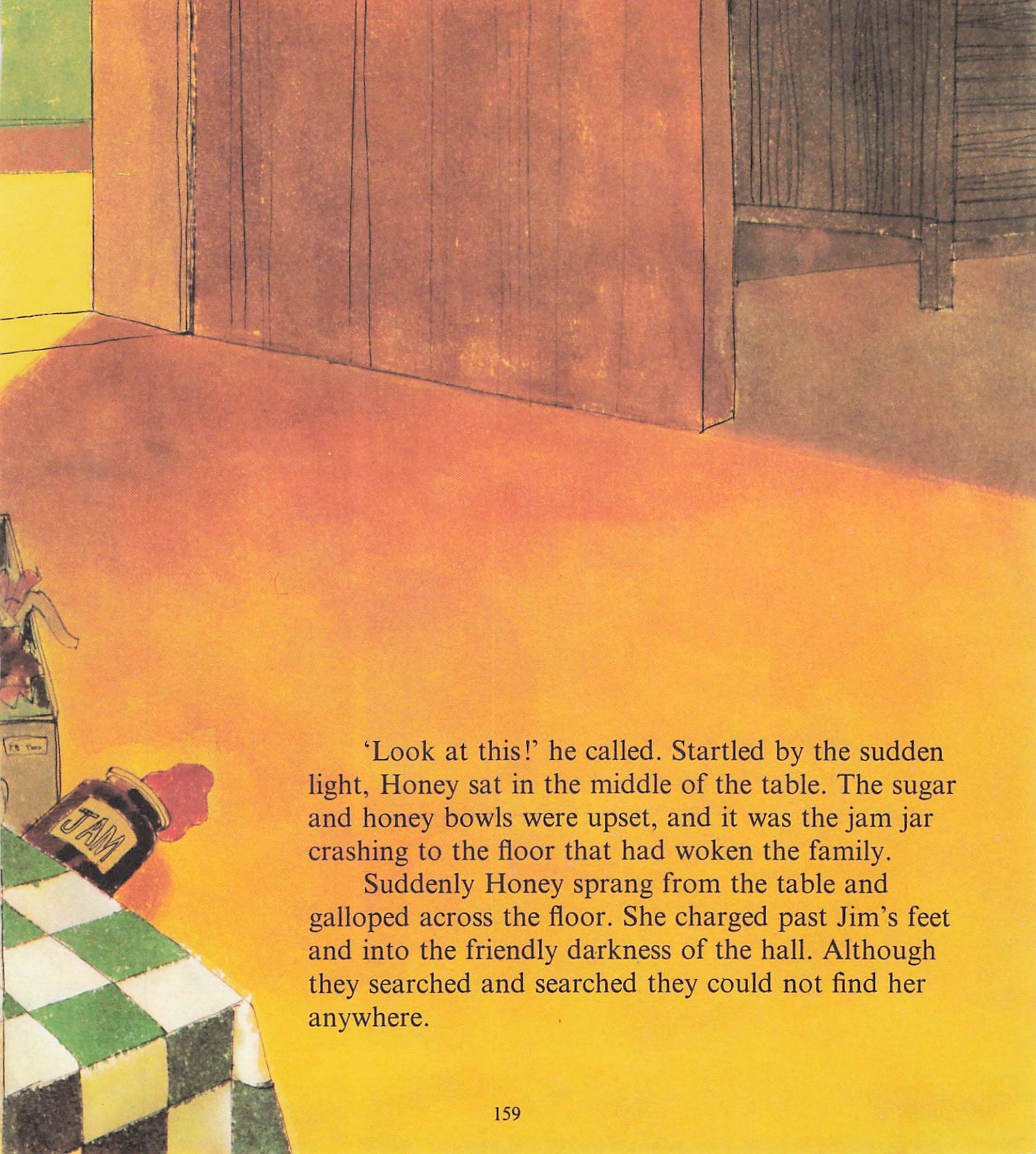
'They usually sleep all day,' smiled Dad. 'Wait until night. She'll be more lively then.' But Honey was still sleeping peacefully when Mum sent Penny and Jim off to bed. It must have been some hours later when there was a great CRASH!

'What's that?' cried Penny, starting up in bed.

'It came from out here,' called Jim, running past her door and switching on the kitchen light.







‘Look at this!’ he called. Startled by the sudden light, Honey sat in the middle of the table. The sugar and honey bowls were upset, and it was the jam jar crashing to the floor that had woken the family.

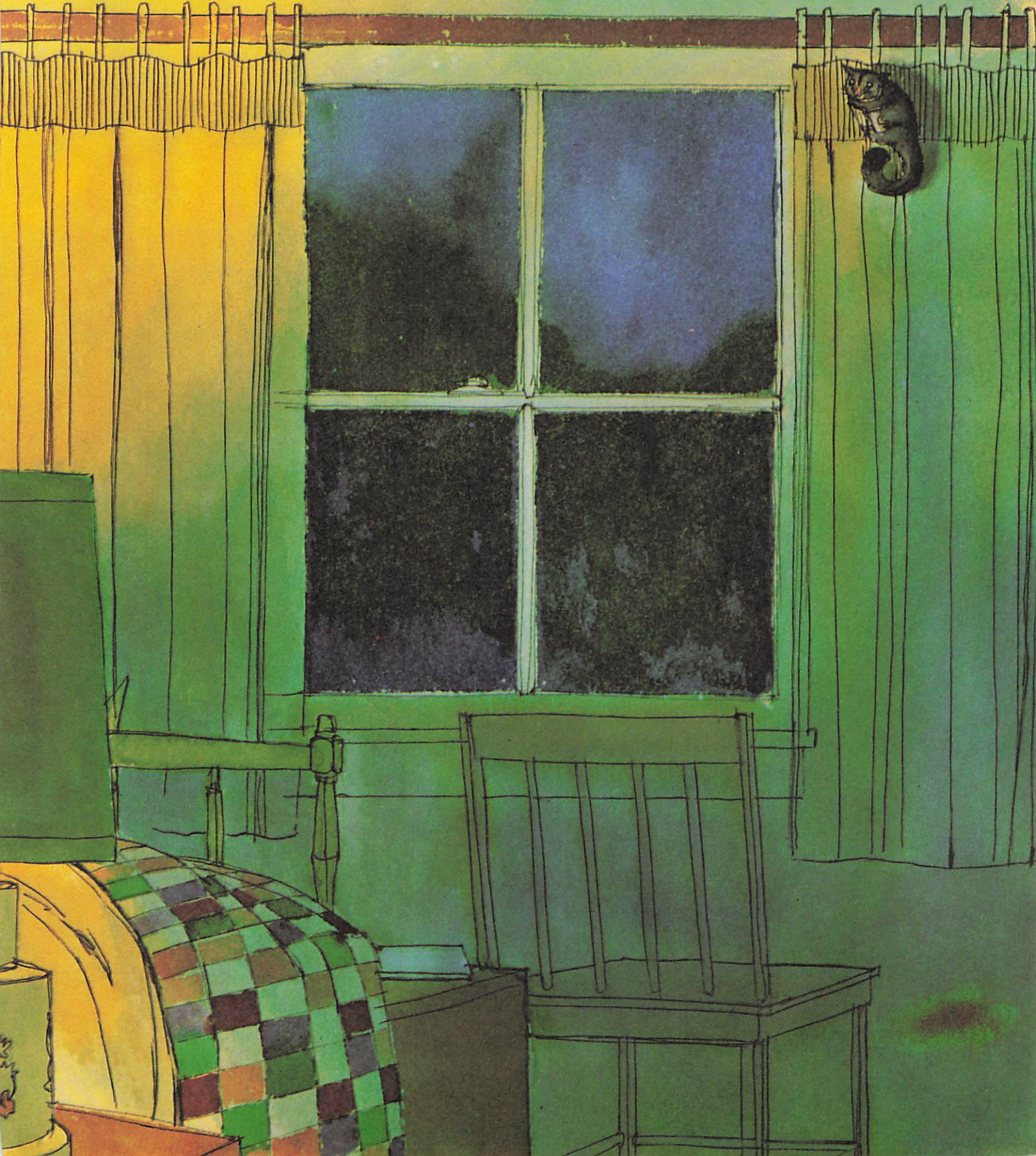
Suddenly Honey sprang from the table and galloped across the floor. She charged past Jim’s feet and into the friendly darkness of the hall. Although they searched and searched they could not find her anywhere.

‘Never mind,’ said Dad. ‘She must be in the house somewhere. We’ll find her in the morning.’

Penny was just dozing off again when she was startled awake by a hissing grunting sound that seemed to come from the window. Snapping on her light she saw Honey clinging to the top of the curtains.

‘Here she is!’ she called, and brought Dad and Jim running to her room.







‘How will you get her down?’ she asked Dad. But Honey solved that problem for herself. With a diving leap she launched herself at Dad and landed on his shoulder.

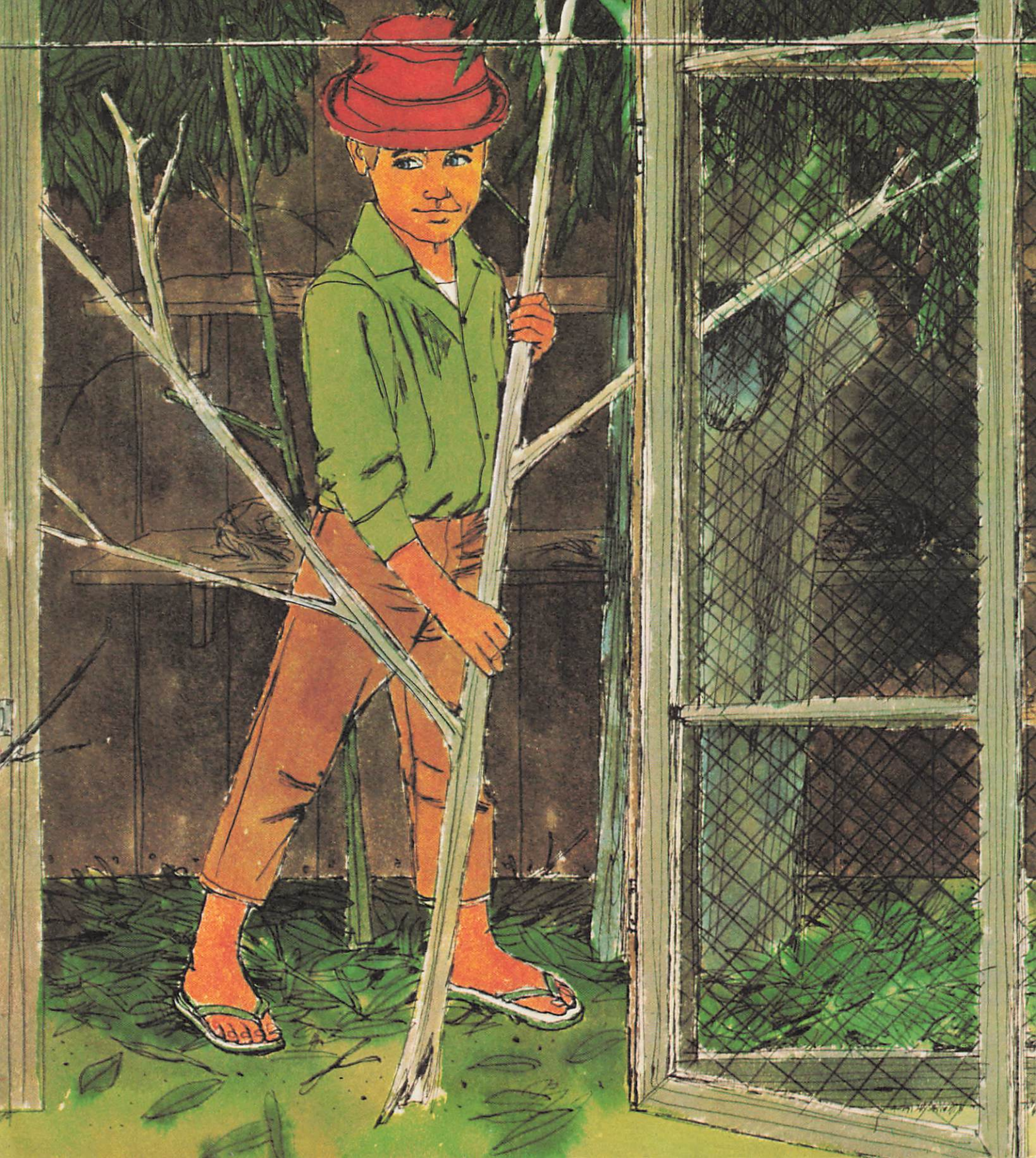
‘She must think you’re a tree,’ laughed Jim, as Dad carried her back to her box. Mum put a piece of bread and honey into the box with her, and then they turned off the light and all crept back to bed, but certainly not for the last time that night.

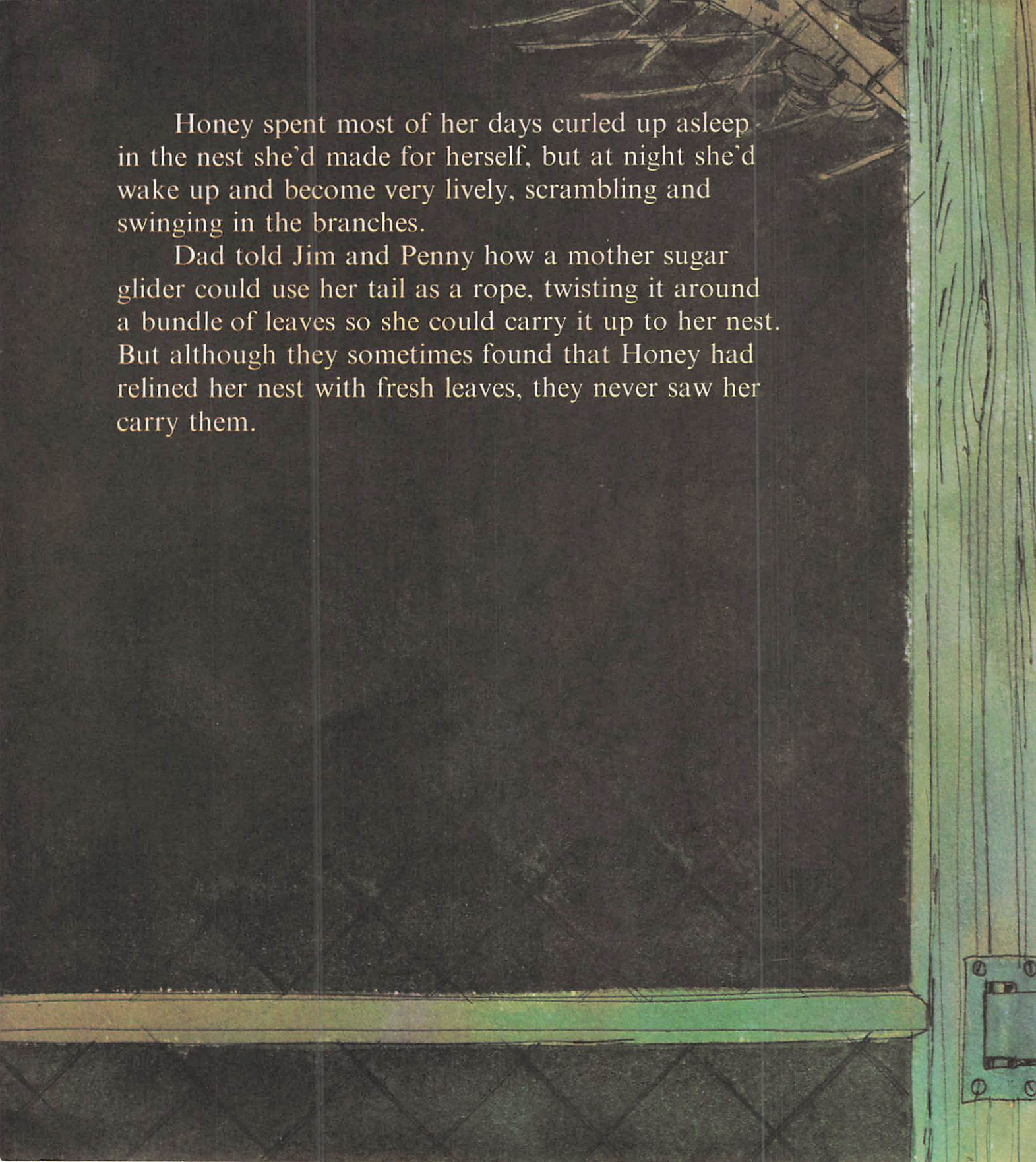


'I think that little larrikin will have to live outside,' said Mum after an almost sleepless night. 'How about the old hen-house? She'll have plenty of room in there, and you can put some gum branches in for her to play about on.'

That night Honey played happily, scampering up and down the branches, licking at the honey Penny had smeared on them, and eating the bread and cake soaked in milk Mum had put out for her.



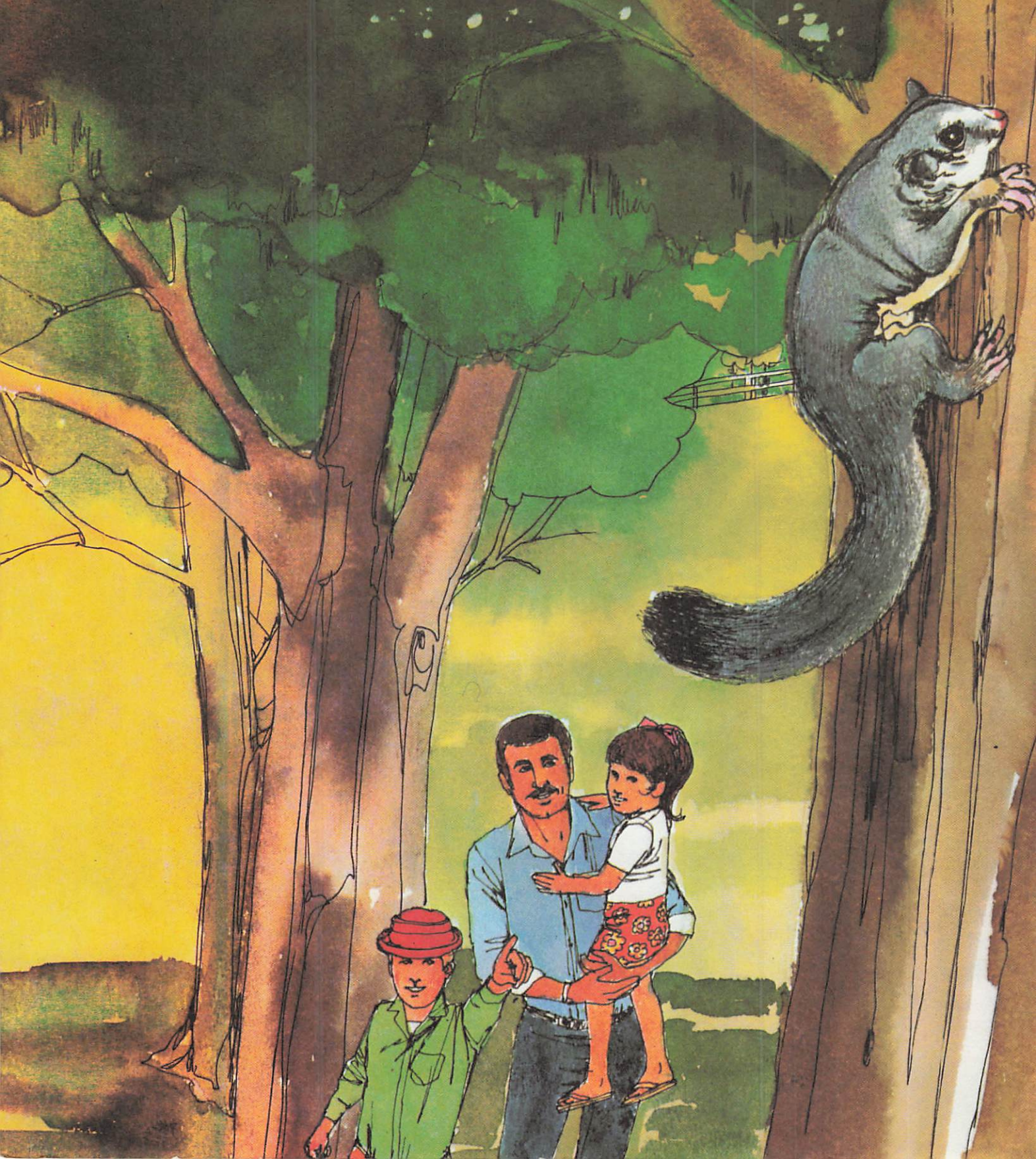


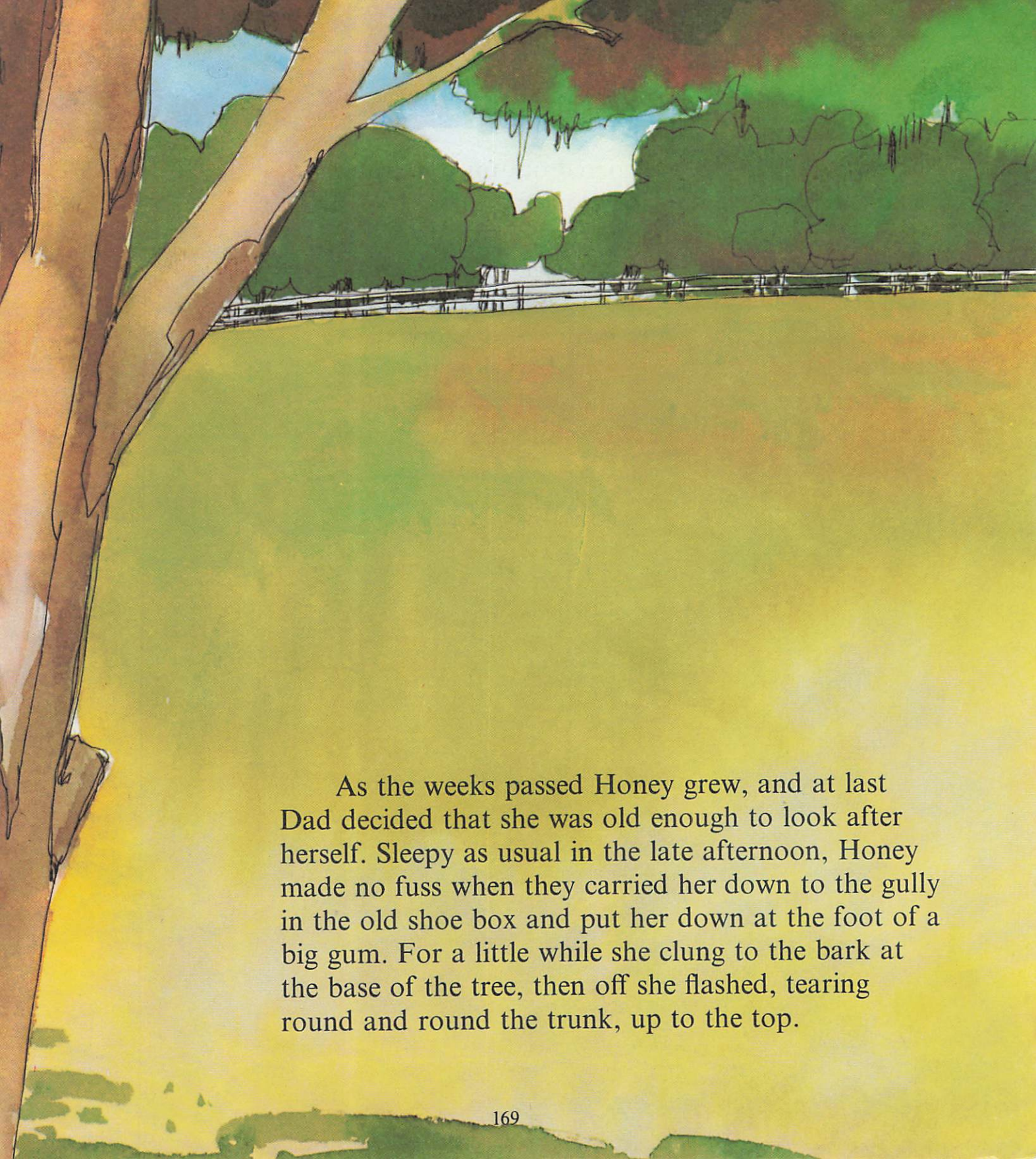


Honey spent most of her days curled up asleep in the nest she'd made for herself, but at night she'd wake up and become very lively, scrambling and swinging in the branches.

Dad told Jim and Penny how a mother sugar glider could use her tail as a rope, twisting it around a bundle of leaves so she could carry it up to her nest. But although they sometimes found that Honey had relined her nest with fresh leaves, they never saw her carry them.







As the weeks passed Honey grew, and at last Dad decided that she was old enough to look after herself. Sleepy as usual in the late afternoon, Honey made no fuss when they carried her down to the gully in the old shoe box and put her down at the foot of a big gum. For a little while she clung to the bark at the base of the tree, then off she flashed, tearing round and round the trunk, up to the top.

At the top she scampered out on to a leaning branch. For a minute she crouched there, looking down at Jim and Penny, then she surged forward in a gliding swoop. The fold of skin between her arms and feet stretched out and her tail moved up and down, guiding her glide. With a soft 'clop' she landed, head up, gripping the bark low down on another tree. Once more she spiralled up to the top and glided through the air to another tree, much further away.







But this time Penny and Jim didn't see where she landed.

'I'm going to miss her,' sighed Penny that night, thinking of the empty hen-house, but Dad smiled at her.

'She won't be far away,' he said. 'Even though we don't see her we'll know she's playing happily in those trees somewhere. And who knows?—if we put out some honey and cake, she just might come scampering down to visit us one of these nights.'

